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The *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema* is the only major refereed academic journal devoted exclusively to the cinemas of these two important East Asian nations. The increased availability of Japanese and Korean films (especially through numerous internet outlets) has substantially broadened the scope of scholarly interest in past and contemporary Korean and Japanese cinema, thus making historical work and analysis of current trends more productive and wide-ranging than ever. Along with the contested history of Japanese-Korean film relations, the increasingly transnational status of Japanese and Korean cinema underlines the need to deepen our understanding of the past and present of this ever-more globalized film making region. We therefore welcome full-length articles that explore such issues as: aesthetics; authorship/key directors; gender constructions; genres/genre hybrids; documentary; industry: production and exhibition; reception; relationships between film and other forms of cultural expression (including popular culture); stardom and performance; transnationalism and inter-connections between Japanese-Korean cinema. We are also interested in book reviews (please contact the editors before submitting a review).

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Obituary

In Memoriam

Our beloved friend and colleague, Keiko McDonald, who had graciously agreed to serve on the advisory board of this journal, died in a tragic accident in the fall of 2008. This was a severe blow to her husband, her colleagues and students at the University of Pittsburgh, and to all of us who had the pleasure of knowing her and working with her over the years. She was unquestionably one of the major authors on the Japanese cinema, a tireless scholar who wrote accessible books aimed at informing the widest possible audience of the pleasures of Japanese film. Her pioneering efforts include *Cinema East, Japanese Classical Theater in Films, From Book to Screen* and *Reading a Japanese Film*, among other works. It is testament to her boundless energy that she was nearing completion on two more books when she died. She was also an extremely popular teacher, always garnering large enrollments in her courses, and a fixture at film and Asian Studies conferences for over thirty years. She guest-edited a number of special issues on Japanese cinema for the journal *Post Script* – indeed she had just finished her latest issue when she died. In addition, she was in the process of organizing a major conference at the University of Pittsburgh on Transnational Asian cinema; the conference will take place in fall of 2009 to honour her memory. An avid runner and fisherman, Keiko McDonald was a unique person, a truly gifted scholar, mentor, teacher and friend. No one who met her could fail to be impressed with her honesty, humour and genuine love of life. She will be missed.

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Editorial

David Desser and Frances Gateward

Scholarly interest in Japanese cinema has been ongoing for well over four decades. This is more than coincident with the rise of academic film studies itself, for Japanese cinema has been part and parcel of the very definition and aims of the serious study of cinema, whether through the lens of auteurism, cultural criticism, or the definitively influential neo-formalism. Over the course of these decades, bookshelves have been filled by full-length studies and collections, while the pages of scholarly journals have overflowed with essays on the subject. The recent rise to prominence of a new generation of film-makers has kept interest in Japanese cinema alive and well, while the worldwide popularity of anime has not only led to the scholarly study of this Japanese genre – a field active for over a decade – but has also served to call attention to live-action Japanese cinema among a younger generation of fans and scholars.

The situation as regards Korean cinema is a bit different. Scholarship on the subject in English, in any case, was sparse until very recently. For the most part, the scholarly interest in Korean cinema has been driven by the popular and critical reception of recent Korean films. A small spate of books has appeared in the last half decade and a large number of essays have similarly accompanied the recent influx of Korean films onto the world's cinematic screens. Scholarly papers devoted to Korean cinema equal those devoted to Japan, an index of the number of younger scholars working in the area of Korea and the excitement generated by new Korean cinema.

Given the scholarly vitality of Japanese and Korean cinema studies, we feel the time is ripe to provide a specialist journal dedicated to these areas. A journal devoted exclusively to Japanese and Korean cinema, including their historical and contemporary interconnections, will well serve this growing community of scholars. The popularity of recent Japanese and Korean films at numerous film festivals, the increasing numbers of retrospective screenings across North America, Europe and Asia, along with the tremendous availability of Japanese and Korean films through numerous Internet outlets, has broadened the scope of scholarly interest beyond film and/or area specialists, and makes historical work with film texts possible in ways that those of us of a certain generation could only dream of. We hope that our journal will provide an outlet for rigorous, but accessible and exciting studies that look into the past, present and future of Japanese and Korean cinema and what has been, and will continue to be, their numerous interconnections.

Topics for essays for future issues may concern:

- historical considerations and reconsiderations
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- genre
- spectatorship and audiences
- reception of Japanese and Korean cinema regionally and globally
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- remakes across national borders
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- representations of Koreans in Japanese film/Japanese in Korean film
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Segregated cinemas, intertwined histories: the ethnically segregated film cultures in 1920s Korea under Japanese colonial rule

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Abstract

The article examines the ethnically segregated film cultures in Korea under Japanese colonial rule, focusing specifically on the film production, exhibition and film-viewing practices in segregated urban areas in Seoul of the 1920s. Due to the massive migration across the Japanese Empire, Japanese migrants accounted for one-fourth of Seoul's entire population beginning in the mid-1910s onwards, which generated rich Japanese urban and film cultures within the colonized city. Hence Japanese film culture did not simply impact upon colonial film cultures externally, but instead it was tightly interwoven within colonial film cultures, exercising its influences on them from within. Through the examination of the separated but at times intertwined film cultures of Koreans and Japanese migrants, this essay looks at where links were made or severed between the imperial film culture and that of the colonized. By doing so, the article ultimately attempts to explore the blurry boundaries between early Japanese and Korean cinemas and a shared film history between the two national cinemas.

Keywords

motion pictures, Korea, history
motion pictures, Japan, history
motion picture industry, Japan/Korea
imperialism, Japan
nationalism, Korea

Defining a national cinema is always an exigent matter, and, as many argue, this is especially so in the age of late capitalism, as the global flows of capital and human resources have been accelerated vertiginously for the past several decades, often challenging the conventional understandings and definitions of national borders. However, these vectors that complexly affect the concept of a national cinema are not the sheer symptoms of globalization or transnationalization of recent decades. The flows of capital and human resources on regional and global scales in the film world have been part of the medium's history from the outset. Especially, during the first several decades of cinema's history, it is noticeably intertwined with imperial projects, which vigorously altered and transformed territorial, political and cultural borders across the globe. Many discussions of national cinema, however, have not actively taken imperialism into consideration. As Stephanie DeBoer (2005: 24) cogently argues, national cinema models have often done little to acknowledge imperialist projects and its many contradictions, although colonialist histories and experiences complicate the boundaries of national cinema.

In particular, Japanese imperialism's overall role and function in the development of national cinemas of its then colonies still remains seriously understudied. A comprehensive history of East Asian cinemas during Japanese imperial rule has yet to be written, largely due to the prolonged decolonization processes that have generated the contesting historical views on the region's colonial/imperial pasts. Today, many East Asian countries consider themselves as having entered into a post-postcolonial era and as being regional leaders and global economic powerhouses, and thus the issues of modernization, colonialism and imperialism seem to become things from the past that they might as well get over. Yet the colonial and imperial pasts frequently resurface, stirring up old and recent memories of conflicts and abhorrence, and creating new tensions and challenges. Japan, the former colonizer, occupies the centre of these ceaseless disputes. As Marlene J. Mayo notes, alive to their own historical pain, Japanese have long remained largely oblivious to Japan's imperial past and its colonial relationship with its then colonies (Mayo, Rimer and Kerkham 2001: 4) As exemplified through the political leaders' persistent visits to the Yasukuni shrine, debates about Japanese history textbooks, and ongoing quarrels with Korea and China over the border issues, Japan seems not too seriously concerned with grunts from its former colonies; Japan wishes its former colonies and the rest of the world to understand that the Japanese are victims too. There was violence, war, exploitation and massacre, but there is no aggressor – only victims exist. In this regard, Japan and its former colonies are still dealing with their unfinished business of decolonization. As a result, histories (and pseudo-histories) of imperialism and colonialism still dictate the present of East Asia.

A similar historiographical issue takes place in writing the film history of East Asia under Japanese colonial rule. Especially, the indifference to Japan's decisive role in its former colonies' film cultures in Japanese film historiography has blurred the early film history of East Asia. As mentioned above, this conspicuous elision is hardly coincidental and is instead the result of a larger historiographical paradigm of post-war Japan, which tends to downplay its imperial past and instead depict Japan as an equal victim of the wars, militarism and imperialism of the epoch. Indeed Japanese historians tend to focus on Japanese imperialism as a problem of Japan in their attempts to understand the origins and failures of Japan's imperial enterprise; Leo Ching writes, 'precisely because the defeat of Japanese militarism occurred at the hands of Allied forces and not under the pressure of its empire's disintegration, the questions did not concern the universal validity of enlightenment or rationality', and thus 'the exigent concern was not that of Japan's relationship to its decolonized "others", but to itself' (Ching 2001: 43–44). The overemphasis on the later years of Japanese empire as well as the exclusive focus on film cultures specific to Japan proper or a limited sense of the Japanese nation during the colonial period in the studies of the colonial cinemas strongly resonate with the aforementioned historiographical trend. It is this myopic historical perspective that dominates Japanese film historiography, accounting for the limited efforts in engaging with the colonial cinemas in Japan and especially the noticeable lack of attention to the complex associations between colonial film-making in Japan's former colonies and the

concept of Japanese national cinema. Yet this historiographical tendency tells only half of the story. The nationalist investments – the counteractive responses to Japanese imperialism – that have haunted such countries as Korea, Taiwan and China as well as many other South East Asian countries, are equally important. As Nick Deocampo eloquently argues in his study on the history of early Filipino cinema under the influences of multiple imperial forces, 'film historians who trace the beginning of a national cinema to a time of fierce nationalism may only be too tempted to investigate history through the rose-colored glasses of a nationalist, but this may be achieved at the expense of history' (Deocampo 2003: 12). In Korea and other former colonies of Japan, the ideals of a nationalist perspective have been overemphasized, but privileging the nationalist paradigm has tended to stifle other possible stories and withhold material historical accounts.

This essay aims to tackle the multiple complexities of the aforementioned problematic of film historiographies and explore the concepts of Korean and Japanese national cinemas during Japanese imperialism by interrogating the mutually constitutive relationship between Korean and Japanese cinema under Japanese colonial rule of Korea (1910–45). Due to the massive emigration to Korea and to other colonies from Japan and vice versa, which essentially characterizes Japanese imperialism and demarcates it from other western imperialisms, a study of colonial national cinemas during Japan's imperialist reign encounters the compound historical questions and challenges; it is unfeasible to discuss colonial cinemas, or contemporaneous Japanese national cinema, without taking into consideration Japanese film cultures implanted and embedded in colonial film cultures. In other words, Japanese cinema did not just impact on the colonial film cultures externally, but instead it was tightly interwoven within colonial film cultures, exercising its influences on them from 'within' on a daily basis. In order to understand the histories of the colonial cinemas, and particularly the blurry boundaries between early Japanese and Korean cinemas, therefore, it is necessary reflect upon the very nature of how one understands the 'cut' that both severs and connects imperial and local film cultures. In this regard, while examining the direct and often physical interactions between imperial and colonial film cultures, this essay also endeavours to trace the historical and discursive constructions of the national and regional film histories.

In this essay, I will focus specifically on how intricate interrelationships between the two ethnic groups' film cultures were inscribed upon the imperial and colonial film cultures across the colonized urban space of Seoul in the 1920s through to the mid-1930s when the ethnically segregated film cultures directed the entire film practice in colonial Korea. There are multiple reasons for limiting the scope of examination to the colonial capital of Seoul. First, due to the serious urbanization during the colonial period, the cultural industry including the film business in Korea was disproportionately concentrated in Seoul. As the colonial capital of the Korean peninsula, a crucial entryway for Japanese imperial expansion to the Asian continent, Seoul functioned not only as the centre of Japanese colonial rule of Korea, but as one of the most significant cities in the Japanese imperial territories, accommodating all the major imperial, political and economic institutions. Accordingly, Seoul had a large Japanese

population and thereby produced rich Japanese urban and film cultures. Thus, ethnic segregation was a chief factor that characterized the urban cultural scene of Seoul and played the pivotal role in shaping its urban modernity as well as the film cultures. A careful examination of this segregation most evidently displays the ways in which the film cultures of the colonizer and colonized interacted with one another.

'Intra-imperial' co-productions

Film historians in two Koreas are still debating over which film counts as the first 'authentically' Korean film, and there are three pretenders to the title of the first Korean film: *Loyal Vengeance* (*Uirijeok Guto*, Kim Do-San, 1919), *The Vow Made Under the Moon* (*Wolhaui Maengse*, Yun Baek-Nam, 1923), and *The Border* (*Gukgyeong*, director unknown, 1923). While in North Korea *The Vow Made Under the Moon* is considered as the first Korean film (Choi and Hong 2001: 15), in South Korea *Loyal Vengeance* was officially selected by the government as the very first Korean film; since 1962, South Korea has celebrated its annual national film day on 27 October, the day when *Loyal Vengeance* was theatrically released in 1919. However, many South Korean film historians have expressed their disagreement with the government's view.[1] Lately, this issue has recurred, as some film historians argue that *The Border* should be considered the first Korean film based on three factors. First, *Loyal Vengeance* is not a film in a strict sense, but a chain drama – a hybrid genre between film and stage play. Second, new material has surfaced indicating that *The Border* was released three months before *The Vow Made Under the Moon.* Third, *The Border* was made in Korea only for Korean audiences, even though it was produced by Shochiku, a Japanese film company. (Cho Hee-Mun 2002) The film historian Kim Jong-Wook, however, discovered a newspaper advertisement that might challenge *The Border*'s newly appraised historical significance. Curiously, he seems to be rather nervous about his own discovery:

> This newspaper ad [of *The Border*] (*Joseon Ilbo*, January 14, 1923) does not even mention Kim Do-San (the director), and according to this ad, except for 23 members of the *sinpa* [New Theatre] troupe, all of the staff appear to be the Japanese ... ; excluding actors, no Korean is introduced as a part of the production crew. This ad negates the nature of *The Border*, the film in which Kim Do-San was deeply involved, that we have known up until now. It makes us seriously rethink about how to look at *The Border,* produced by the Japanese Shochiku Company. I felt I needed to brood over this, so I did not make this finding public even though I own it myself, which makes me very uncomfortable.
>
> (Kim Jong-Wook 2002: 153)

Kim appears to be awfully perturbed by his own finding, which potentially deteriorates the historical importance of *The Border* and perhaps calls for yet another rewriting of early Korean film history. What this anxious film historian's discovery especially challenges is the obsession with 'purity' in narrating the nation's colonial film history. A spotless 'Korean-ness' is the ultimate qualification for becoming a Korean film, but the fact that the entire staff for *The Border* was the Japanese significantly

1. As *Loyal Vengeance* was authoritatively designated as the first film by the government, it left a margin for never-ending debates over its legitimacy as the first Korean film in South Korea. The logic behind this decision is that *Loyal Vengeance* was the first film produced by Koreans, Kim Do-San and his theatre group, and its casts were 'mostly' Koreans, while the other two films *The Border* and *The Vow Made Under the Moon* were financed by Shochiku, a Japanese film studio, and the Office of the Governor-General respectively (Cho Hee-Moon 2002: 14–19). Consequently, the degree to which a film is 'untainted' by Japanese hands or how 'pure' it is has become the sole standard for determining the first Korean film. Quite ironically, however, *Loyal Vengeance* embodies a distinctive Japanese influence; the cinematographer and editor of the film were Japanese and, more importantly, the chain drama (*rensageki*) was a genre invented in Japan, which gained its popularity in Korean from the late 1910s through the early 1930s after it was imported from Japan.

undermines the film's 'pureness' and thus its assumed 'Korean-ness'. Kim's frustration well evidences how much force colonial film history written with nationalist perspectives exerts on even an individual historian, so much so as to compel him to literally withhold factual historical material just because it is incongruent with the grand narrative of national film history.

The issue at hand here goes beyond a single film; the actual suppression of historical materials not only verifies problematically manipulative efforts in nationalist film historiography that attempt to keep the carefully constructed historiographical paradigm intact, but displays the ways in which this specific historical writing thwarts a critical engagement with the concepts and boundaries of Korean national cinema. In order to examine the correlation between imperialism and the concepts of national cinema in the specific context of Japanese colonial rule of Korea, let me raise the following questions in relation to the film *The Border*. How can we define the nationality of *The Border*, a film financed by a Japanese studio, made by Japanese film-makers with Korean actors, and released solely for Korean spectators? The easiest answer would be that *The Border* is a Japanese film since Korea under Japanese colonial rule was considered a Japanese territory according to international law at the time. Yet it is not that simple to be content with this kind of explanation, and not just because Japanese colonial rule was declared 'illegal' and thus officially dismissed upon the governmental agreement between Japan and Korea in the 1960s. First of all, if we accept this answer, then we have to face a serious political and historical question, erasing the colonial period from Korea's national history. In other words, assuming that Korea completely disappeared from a map in both political and physical senses during this period as it was a Japanese territory is nothing but colluding with Japanese imperial logic. Besides, in actuality Japan saw Korea simultaneously as part of Japan and 'other', and this paradoxical understanding of the Korean peninsula stemmed from Japanese imperialism's dual policies of assimilation and differentiation which resulted in efforts to create the demarcation between Japan and Korea. Although the Korean peninsula was officially part of Japan, both the Koreans and Japanese were constantly and consistently reminded that they were two different groups of *minjok*/*minzoku* (ethnic people).

Another possible answer is that *The Border* is a Korean film, but the problems entailed in this answer are well reflected on Korean film historians' struggle to define a 'Korean film' and 'Korean national cinema' in the colonial context, as exemplified by Kim's disturbance with his own research. If one strictly adheres to the 'purity' discourse of Korea's nationalist film historiography, there is no single film qualified to be a Korean film, since no film from the colonial period was completely free from Japanese intervention in one way or another. This arbitrary definition of what constitutes a 'pure' Korean film in Korean film histories has allowed many 'questionable' films to be categorized as Korean films while dismissing and branding others as 'lesser' Korean films. As a result, such unreflexive positions have fuelled a seemingly never-ending series of debates concerning the nationalist film historiographical paradigm.

The very same question can be easily extended to the Japanese national cinema. In a similar fashion to Korean film historiography, innumerable Japanese film-makers, film business personnel, film companies and movie theatres across the Japanese imperial territories have yet to be sufficiently explored in Japanese national film history. Furthermore, it is even less discussed that the influence was not always unidirectional, as many film-makers from Japan's former colonies directly impacted on the development of the Japanese film industry as well. As a matter of fact, as early as in the mid-1910s, Korean film-makers, like many other intellectuals, students and artists, went to Japan, and some of them returned to Korea after studying film-making while others stayed in Japan and pursued their film careers in Japanese film studios.

Among those figures, Yi Pil-Wu, a pioneering film-maker/film entrepreneur, certainly stands out. Yi, who worked in both the Korean and Japanese film industry, produced and directed films and distributed foreign films in Korea, opened a film distribution office in Japan, and co-produced films with Japanese studios. Significantly, during a visit to Japan in the early 1930s, he was invited to participate in inventing the *Tsuchihashi* system, a sound-on-film technology, used for Japan's first talkie, *My Neighbour's Wife and Mine* (*Madam to Nyobo*, Gosho Heinosuke, 1931).[2] As one of three inventors of the *Tsuchihashi* system, along with Tsuchihashi Takeo and Nakajima Kyoshi, Yi acquired a patent right to it, although this right was limited to the use in Korea, instead of sharing a profit from it. Yet he did not simply use this technology, instead he worked with his brother Yi Myeong-Wu to create their own PKR system (1933), a sound-on-film technology ('Yi Pil-Wu' 2003: 271–72). Interestingly, *The Tale of Chunhyang* (*Chunhyangjeon*, Yi Myeong-Wu, 1935), Korea's first talkie film, which used the Yi brothers' PKR system, was produced by Gyeongseong Film Production (Gyeongseong Chalyeongso) that was owned by the Japanese producer Wakejima Fujiro. Wakejima settled in Seoul and became an influential businessman in the 1910s. With his acquisition of the Keijo Theatre in 1919, he entered into the entertainment business and later opened Gyeongseong Film Production in 1933 (Kim Ryeo-Sil 2006: 136). In this regard, the active movement of film people across the Korean Strait resulted in mutual influences between the Japanese and Korean film industries, although the degree of influences apparently differed due to their colonial relationship.

A Plaintive Melody of Sea (*Haeui Bigok*, Takasa Kanjo, 1924), a film produced in Korea by Japanese capital with a Korean and Japanese cast and staff, shows another form of the collaboration between Japanese and Korean film-makers and reveals a shared history of early Japanese and Korean cinemas. *A Plaintive Melody of Sea*, a melodrama that tells the tragic love story of a Korean couple who later turn out to be half-siblings, was produced by Joseon Kinema Corporation. Joseon Kinema, the first film corporation in Korea, established in 1924, was based in Busan, a port city in the south-eastern region which was the literal gateway to Korea from Japan. The founders of the firm consisted of Japanese investors including Naide Otoichi (a company executive), Kato Seiichi (the director of a hospital), Watanabe Tatsuzo (a painter), Kubota Gorō (a lawyer) and Takasa Kancho (a Buddhist monk) ('Chōsende Eiga no Zeisakuo Kaishi' 1924: 70–71).

2. The *Tsuchihashi* system was named after Tsuchihashi Takeo, its chief inventor. When inventing the *Tsuchihashi* system, Tsuchihashi Takeo worked for the Shochiku Film Company (Kamata Studios). Tsuchihashi participated in about forty Shochiku films from 1931 to 1938 as a sound recorder.

Joseon Kinema made a contract with the Korean Literary Arts Association (Joseon Munyeo Hyeobhoi), a *sinpa* group whose members were mostly dramatists and actors. Hence the staff for its films, including the producer and director, were Japanese, but the actors were mostly Koreans. *A Plaintive Melody of Sea* was Joseon Kinema's first project, and the film was quite successful in Korea when it was released. Yet the film was not geared only towards Korean audiences: the company aimed to 'practice harmony between Japan and Korea (*naisen shinwa*) through film-making and introduce Korean situation to the Japanese' ('Chōsende Eiga no Zeisakuo Kaishi' 1924: 72). Thus, the film was 'exported' to Japan through Nikkatsu Studio and was quite successful, clearing a 3,000 *won* profit from the Japanese and Korean markets combined (*Maeil Sinbo*, 13 November 1924). A Japanese film magazine from 1924 (*Shibakyo to Kinema*) reports on 'Joseon (Korean) Drama by Joseon Kinema and Shochiku' with still photos of film scenes, actors and actresses from *The Tale of Unyeong* (*Unyeongjeon*, Yun Baek-Nam, 1924), the second production by Joseon Kinema, and Shochiku's *Standing Against the Countercurrent* (*Gyakuryu ni tachite,* Yasuda Norikuni, 1924) and *Wizard* (*Sennin*, Shimazu Yasujiro, 1924). The magazine includes the photos of a Japanese actress wearing a traditional Korean dress (a *hanbok*, see the photo on the far right of Figure 1), Yim Cheon-Se, a Korean actress who worked for Shochiku Studios (the far left at the bottom, in Figure 1) and a shooting location in the Chiba Prefecture for *Standing Against the Countercurrent* (the middle at the bottom, in Figure 1), which show that Joseon drama was an established film genre in Japanese film industry.[3]

Toyama Mitsuru Productions, another film concern established in 1931 by Japanese investors, followed almost exactly the path paved by Joseon Kinema Corporation. The company, led by Toyama Mitsuru, a Japanese period-drama actor, produced its first film, *Sadness at Geumgang Mountain* (*Geumganghan*) in 1931. It hired Nah Un-Gyu, the leading Korean film-maker, as a director, and both Nah and Toyama starred in the film as well. The firm, with its 100,000 *won* investment – partially financed by Wakejima Fujiro – planned to release its films in Japan, but it failed to do so (*Maeil Sinbo*, 22 November 1930). Toyama Mitsuru Productions made three more films, all produced by Toyama. Toyama made his directorial debut with the company's last film, *A Brilliant Life* (*Bitnaneun Insaeng*, 1933) (*Joseon Jungangilbo*, 23 April 1933). After his career as a film producer in Korea was over, Toyama returned to Japan and his acting career, working particularly closely with Inagaki Hiroshi, appearing in such period films as *The Last Day of Edo* (*Edo saigo no hi*, 1941), *Miyamoto Musashi: Duel at Ichijo Temple* (*Miyamoto Musashi: Ichijoji ketto*, 1942) and *Sasaki Kojiro* (1950).

Joseon Kinema's and Toyama Mitsuru Productions' ventures in Korea as well as Shochiku's Korean drama genre embody the multiple aspects of the collaborative efforts between Japanese and Korean film production. They demonstrate that the exchanges between the two film industries included not only diverse forms of collaboration between Korean and Japanese film-makers but also the flows of capital, genre and style across 'borders'. Hence while the entirety of films produced in Korea during the colonial period had a clear imprint of 'Japanese-ness' one way or another,

3. The captions describing *The Tale of Unyeong* say the scenes are from *A Plaintive Melody of Sea*, Joseon Kinema's first film, but these descriptions are incorrect.

Figure 1: "Joseon Drama by Joseon Kinema and Shochiku," from Shibakyo to Kinema, *October 1924.*

whether it be at the production phase or theatrical exhibition, the Japanese film industry was anxious to expand its market and industry by way of working with Korean film-makers and capitalizing on Korea's growing film market. Therefore, the Korean film industry's contribution to the development of the Japanese film industry and culture is as important as the marks the Japanese left on early Korean film history when we consider a shared early film history between two national cinemas.

Despite its pioneering and ambitious attempt to visually bridge the empire and its colony, Joseon Kinema failed to follow up its initial success and was dissolved after only three more mediocre films in 1925. The more

crucial problematic Joseon Kinema faced was the 'immature' or small Korean market, as it was not big enough to sustain a corporation founded with an astonishing 200,000 *won* investment ('Na Un-Gyuwa Shin Il-Seonuirobuteo Mun Yeo-Bong...' 1940: 227). Joseon Kinema wished to release its films in Japan, but with the exception of its first film, none of its other films were distributed there, and thus they were just consumed by Korean audiences in Korea who were not at all satisfied with the films.

What is intriguing about Joseon Kinema's attempt to develop the Korean film market is that the company did not even try to reach Japanese audiences on the Korean peninsula, another potential market in Korea, despite its financial struggle. It would have been reasonably easy for the company to consider expanding its target audience through appeals to Japanese audiences within Korea, but the company was too preoccupied with developing the 'Korean' film market by disguising the company's Japanese origin. For instance, the director/screenwriter of *A Plaintive Melody of Sea*, Takasa Kanjo, one of the founding members of the firm, and Ozawa, one of the film's main actors, used Korean names – Wang Pil-Yeol and Ju Sam-Son respectively – for film credits as a means to effectively evade Korean audiences' anti-Japanese sentiments (Cho Kyong Hwan 1999: 56). In fact, this shrewd manoeuvre to 'confuse' Korean audiences seemed to work just fine, as even some Korean film critics at the time assumed that Takasa was a Korean director when they expressed their disappointment in the last two films Takasa directed for Joseon Kinema (Yun 1925; *Maeil Sinbo*, 13 December 1924). The way Joseon Kinema limited its audience to Koreans shows that the two film cultures in colonial Korea – Japanese migrants' film culture and Koreans' film culture – were seen as two separate entities. Significantly, the Japanese film culture in Korea was quite independent from the Japanese film industry in Japan proper as well. In this sense, in order to understand colonial film cultures in Korea more comprehensively, it is crucial to interrogate the Japanese film culture embedded in colonial film cultures in Korea, which was on the 'border' between Korean film culture and Japanese film culture in Japan proper, not just geographically but also industrially and culturally.

The ethnically segregated film audiences

The problem of pinpointing where the first film screening was held is not an issue unique to Korea. Yet in Korea this issue is much more difficult to tackle because Korea had no indoor theatre tradition and this significantly delayed the implementation of public film screenings including movie theatres. Before Hyeobyulsa, Korea's first indoor theatre established in 1902, there was no single permanent indoor theatre in Korea, and Korea saw its first movie theatre in Gyeongseong High Entertainment Theatre (*Gyeongseong Godeung Yeonyeogwan*) only in 1910. Due to the lack of theatre space, films were exhibited at various places not typically considered as appropriate spaces for film screenings. In many cases movie screenings occurred in private settings, which makes it even more difficult to find any forms of written records that definitively establish the details of these film screenings. The most universally accepted assumption is that films were first screened privately at various foreign residential areas and hotels by and for foreign visitors or residents in Korea.[4] Recently, a theory that the

4. Hanseong Electric Company's promotional film screening event has been widely recognized as the first public and commercial film screening in Korea (1903). In 2001, the two Korean film historians, Kim Jong-Won and Jeong Jung-Heon, claimed that they had recovered a brief report in the *London Times*, a British newspaper, on film screenings at a barrack located in Seoul's North Village in 1897 (10 October) in which the British entrepreneur Esther House and the Korean Tobacco Company (Joseon Yeoncho Hoisa) played a series of French Pathé shorts (Kim and Jeong 2001: 20–21). This assertion was quickly challenged by many film historians who argued that the *London Times* did not exist in 1897 and thus questioned the validity of the archival discovery by Kim and Jeong. This controversy evidently shows the difficulties involved in determining the first film screening in Korea. For the detailed accounts of the debates over the first film screenings in Korea, see Kim Ryeo-Sil (2006: 21–34).

first screening in Korea took place in 1897 at a Japanese private household or community centre in Honmachi, a Japanese residential area in Seoul – the Chungmuro area today – has gained increasing support. Unfortunately, there is no single documentation that directly attests to this screening, and only different versions of stories concerning this screening have been passed down. For instance, several essays from the 1920s and 1930s on early Korean film history claim that the first screening was done in a Japanese residential area without presenting any kind of concrete evidence (Shim 1929; Son 1933). Ichikawa Sai, a Japanese film historian, writes that the first film screening took place in a Japanese residential area in his *The Creation and Construction of Asian Cinema* (*Ajia Eiga no Sōzō oyobi Kensetsu*), an attempt to film-theorize Japan's ideology of 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity', but he also notes that there is no documentation about it (Ichikawa 1941: 99).

Whether or not the private film screening at a Japanese residence was the earliest film screening in Korea seems quite difficult to determine unless more solid materials turn up, but the fact that a film screening at a Japanese residential area is deemed as one of the possible first film screenings in Korea is certainly enough to be intriguing for many reasons. First of all, this reveals how much Japanese and Korean film histories at their earliest stages were intertwined and, more importantly, how deeply Japanese film culture 'intruded' into Korean film culture even long before the Japanese occupation began in 1910. Another overriding issue here is the very presence of the Japanese in the heart of Seoul in the late 1890s, more than a decade earlier than Japan's colonization of Korea, and their influences in the development of film cultures in Korea.

Japan's 'great migration' to Korea started in 1876 when Japan used military threats to force Korea to sign the Ganghwa Island Treaty. This unequal trade treaty signalled the true beginning of the Japanese imperial march toward Korea. Importantly, it included the granting of residential rights for the Japanese in Korea, accommodating the specially designated areas for Japanese migrants where Korean law did not apply. Migration was slow at first, and the real breakthrough happened only in 1910 when Japan officially colonized Korea and many of the restrictions to Japanese emigration to Korea were lifted. From thereon, the numbers of Japanese migrants sharply increased throughout the 1910s, and the growth of the Japanese population continued to accelerate through the 1920s.

Following the signing of the Japan–Korea Trading Treaty in 1885, which legally allowed the Japanese to purchase real estate in Seoul (Takasaki 2006: 39–54), the majority of the Japanese migrants settled in Seoul, and thus so-called 'Japanese streets' began to appear around the Japanese Embassy located near South Mountain (Nam-san). The Japanese kept on building and expanding Japanese communities and areas, so their everyday lives were the same as when they lived in Japan. Toward the end of the 1910s, Seoul was fully transformed into an ethnically divided colonial – or hybrid – city where Japanese everyday cultures and customs had migrated, blended and clashed with Korean ways of life.

After the colonization, Seoul almost immediately lost its position as the nation's capital and became just a city that belonged to the Gyeonggi Province in October 1910. And its name was forcefully changed from

Hanseong to Gyeongseong (Keijo in Japanese pronunciation) ('Chihōkan Kansei' 1910: 125–26). In spite of these changes, Seoul continued to function as the colonial capital. The rapidly modernizing colonial capital witnessed the sharp growth in its population throughout the colonial period, in large part because it attracted not only Korean people from across the peninsula but also people from the other side of Korea's South Sea. Japanese migrants in Seoul accounted for about 20–25 per cent of the entire population of the city beginning in the mid-1910s onward. In 1915, about 60,000 out of Seoul's 250,000 residents were the Japanese, and in 1925 when Seoul's population reached 400,000, approximately 100,000 were Japanese migrants (*Chōsen Sodokufu Tōkei Renkan 1926* 1928: 24–25).

Consequently, coming into the 1920s, Seoul had become one of the major cities in the Japanese imperial territories and the colonized city that had the largest Japanese population outside of Japan proper. The Cheonggye stream served as a symbolic border between the Korean-populated Bukchon or North Village (today's Jongno district) and the Japanese-dominated Namchon or South Village (today's Chungmuro and South Gate areas). The ethnically segregated city generated distinct cultural forms. Unlike other Korean cities where only one or two movie theatres were in business, Seoul, as the colony's actual capital, functioned as the cultural centre and boasted a total of eight movie theatres in the 1920s. Among those theatres, Taishokan, Geiryukan, Kirakukan, Chuokan and Ōgonkan, located in South Village, exclusively served Japanese film patrons with the screenings of Japanese, American and European films. Joseon Geukjang, Dansungsa, and Umigwan in North Village, on the other hand, catered for Korean spectators with their film programmes that consisted of Korean, Hollywood and European movies. These ethnically specified film exhibition practices from the mid-1910s to the mid-1930s created little chance or need for Japanese and Korean film patrons to intermingle at the cinema.

In order to discuss the ways in which Japanese film culture and Korean film culture had formed and interacted with each other, I would like to examine the Korean film scene in 1926: the year that bears a special imprint for Korean film history. The year 1926 is unequivocally recognized as the decisive turning point for Korean national cinema, primarily because it produced *the* masterpiece, *Arirang* (1926), which raised film-making in Korea to a new level and saw the birth of Korea's first auteur and superstar in Nah Un-Gyu (Na Un-kyu), the director and protagonist of the film. In addition to its high production quality, commercial success and immense influence on subsequent film production and culture in colonial Korea, *Arirang* has been also hailed in North and South Korea alike as the most significant work expressing fervent Korean nationalism against Japanese imperialism, and as the foundational work for Korean national cinema. Nah Un-Gyu's (and *Arirang*'s) unprecedented popularity and influence led his contemporaries and subsequent generations to casually refer to the years between 1926 and the early 1930s as the Nah Un-Gyu or *Arirang* era.

Without a doubt, therefore, in the first chapter of Korean film history, *Arirang* is the film of the year 1926, and Nah is the film-maker of the year.

The biggest story of the year and the one that intrigued all the movie fans in Korea, however, was neither Nah nor *Arirang* but a spectacle from Hollywood that featured one of the earliest global stars Hollywood produced: *The Black Pirate*, directed by Albert Parker and starring Douglas Fairbanks. In order to make more sense of this slightly baffling historical fact that to some extent taints the glorious status that *Arirang* has enjoyed, it is important to consider the ethnically segregated film cultures and filmgoing and viewing practices. Simply put, this rather bold claim that Fairbanks outshone Nah in this critical year of 1926 is based on the fact that *Arirang* did not mean much to a great portion of the populace in Korea. Especially, in Seoul *Arirang* did not reach almost one-fourth of the city's population. In fact, these people, the migrants from Japan, did not even have an opportunity to appreciate the film at all; no Japanese movie theatre in Seoul or other cities screened *Arirang*, and no Japanese newspaper published in Korea wrote a single article on the film. To put it differently, more than half of movie theatres in Seoul and more than two-thirds of the entire movie theatres in Korea did not even play the film.

Unlike Nah, whose fans consisted only of Koreans, Douglas Fairbanks quickly emerged as the most powerful star appealing to all the film aficionados in Korea. As Douglas Fairbanks was on his way to international stardom with his swashbucklers, he became among the most celebrated movie stars in Korea, with the commercial successes of such films as *The Three Musketeers* (Fred Niblo, 1921; released in Korea in 1924 and re-released in 1925), *Robin Hood* (Allan Dwan, 1922; released in 1924), *The Mollycoddle* (Victor Fleming, 1920; released in 1925), and *The Thief of Bagdad* (Raoul Walsh, 1920; released in 1925). Due to the success after success of Fairbanks's films and established stardom, his name guaranteed a huge turnout, and his popularity and ticket-selling power were reflected in much higher distribution rights fees for his films. In Korea of the 1920s the average distribution fee for a programme of Hollywood films – one programme consisted of a short, a feature, a documentary and a serial – was around 600 to 1,000 *won*. Some Hollywood features with popular directors or actors – D.W. Griffith's *Way Down East* (1920) and *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), for example – cost 300–350 *won* alone. European films cost a little less than that, about 150–200 *won* apiece. The distribution fee for Douglas Fairbanks's films, however, reached an astonishing 1,000 *won,* which equalled to 500 US dollars at the time.

In 1926 Fairbanks's latest film, *The Black Pirate*, stirred up the film-business world in Korea once again, and the chase for the rights to this new feature film became quite a show itself. The overheated competition to acquire the distribution rights to *The Black Pirate* involved not just Korean movie theatres and film distributors, but the Japanese movie theatres in Seoul as well. Initially Kirakukan, a Japanese movie theatre, approached United Artists' branch office in Japan, and was given a distribution right. Kirakukan began to look for a Korean theatre that would pay half of the distribution fee and release the film for Korean audiences. Umigwan and Joseon Geukjang immediately expressed their interest in the film, and thus the notorious bidding began. Witnessing the overheated competition between two Korean theatres, other Japanese theatres decided to approach the agency covertly, and thus the situation became quite ugly

while the distribution fee kept rising due to the unexpectedly escalated interests. The Japanese agent for United Artists, Koyama, who acknowledged the abnormally heated competition that got every movie theatre in Seoul involved, threatened theatres that he would not ship the film to Korea on time in order to make the bidding more competitive, which led the parties involved to even travel to Japan to work out negotiations (*Donga Ilbo*, 13 November 1926). In the end the police intervened, and the distribution and exhibition rights were garnered to Dansungsa for Korean spectators and Ōgonkan for the Japanese, with each theatre paying 1,200 *won* (total 2,400 *won*), an unheard-of amount at the time. Despite the record-breaking price theatres paid for the rights to the film, *The Black Pirate*, released simultaneously at Dansungsa and Ōgonkan between 16 November through to 22 November, was a huge success.

The case of *The Black Pirate* indicates that there were two separated but at the same time interconnected film cultures in Korea. Without question, Nah Un-Gyu was the star and hero *of Koreans* in 1926 but that does not

Figure 2: A Korean newspaper review of Douglas Fairbanks' The Black Pirate *for Korean audiences, printed in* Donga Ilbo, *November 13, 1926.*

Figure 3: A Japanese newspaper ad of The Black Pirate *for Japanese audiences, printed in* Keijo Nippo, *October 8, 1926.*

necessarily mean that he was the star *in* Korea due to the ethnically segregated film cultures which made it impossible for his *Arirang* to reach Japanese film patrons in Korea. Yet the popularity of Douglas Fairbanks and overheated competition to acquire distribution rights to *The Black Pirate* also demonstrate one manner in which the Korean and Japanese film cultures were intertwined despite their distinctive film cultures. In other words, the fact that Japanese and Korean film patrons watched the same film on the same day reveals that both audiences were in fact connected, as Korean and Japanese distribution systems in Korea shared the same commercial interests and thus often worked together.

This intricate coexistence of Japanese and Korean film cultures corresponds to the ways in which Koreans and Japanese divided urban spaces and pursued separate everyday lives. Every social sector in colonial Korea was segregated along ethnicity, and it spawned the film cultures specific to each ethnic group.[5] In this regard, it is important to scrutinize the very nature of the

5. The language issue especially was one of the decisive reasons for the ethnically segregated film practice. Up until the late 1930s, when the Office of the Governor-General began to force Koreans to use the Japanese language (the removal of Korean-language education from the school curriculum (1938) and the ban on publication of Korean cultural products (1940)),

Japanese empire – its emigration and assimilation policies, in particular – to adequately understand the unique position of Japanese film culture embedded within colonial Korea in both Korean and Japanese film history. The vigorous flows of imperial and colonial subjects across Japan's colonial territories and Japan proper stemmed from Japanese imperialism's fundamental ideological and political scheme, which stressed assimilation, turning colonial subjects into Japanese. Quite different from British, French or American imperialist models, Japanese imperialism, which colonized its adjacent countries, encouraged and often forced the Japanese and other colonial subjects to intermingle with each other and migrate to other colonial territories. Emigration across the Japanese empire reveals the unique characteristic of the Japanese imperial project, what Leo Ching (2001: 23) calls, 'imperialism without capital'; indicating that Japan itself was in dire need of industrialization and modernization just like its colonies. In other words, Japan's migration policies were tethered to the modernization efforts across Japanese colonial territories, which were in constant demand of labour forces.

The active migration and connectivity between Japan and its colonies in association with the assimilation efforts formed the central agenda of Japanese imperialism. There was a serious imbalance, however, between the ideal of assimilation and its actual application. Tessa Morris-Suzuki (1998: 159) argues that because, as Japan 'attempted to juggle two essentially contradictory principles – the principle of the nation-state on the one hand and the principle of colonialism on the other – official definitions of nationality and national identity in the Taisho period [1912–1926] were almost inevitably fraught with insoluble paradoxes,' and 'one of the most important of these paradoxes was that the colonial order needed to produce both similarity and difference in its subjects'. Indeed Japanese imperialism ardently produced its imperial system and structure by firmly grounding them in this very paradoxical ideology, and thus assimilation always coexisted with the differentiation efforts between the colonizers and colonized as a means of maintaining the colonial order. Regarding how this ideology took effect in reality, Leo Ching (2001: 6) writes:

> *Doka* (Assimilation) and *Kominka* (Imperialization), by urging and then insisting that the colonized become Japanese, conceal the inequality between the 'natural' Japanese, whose political and economic privileges as citizens are guaranteed, and those 'naturalized' Japanese, whose cultural identities as Japanese are required, but whose political and economic rights as citizens are continuously denied. In short, it was to conceal the fundamental problem of the citizenship of the non-Japanese within the empire that the categories of 'Japanese' and 'imperial subjects' were constructed and mobilized.

What is particularly interesting in his analysis is the distinction Ching draws between 'cultural identities' and 'political or economic identities'. The word 'culture', or '*bunka*' in Japanese, as used here is in fact a tricky term to define, because *bunka* signified more than just 'culture'. In August 1919, right after the most serious and widespread nationalist movement since Japanese colonization swept the Korean peninsula, the Office of the Governor-General introduced the so-called 'Cultural Rule' that replaced the previous 'Militant Rule', a coercive colonial policy, as an attempt to

Koreans did not necessarily need to learn Japanese unless they were politicians or government workers who were required to speak the language. The uses of different languages contributed a great deal to the ethnically segregated film cultures, particularly because, as in Japan, the presence of *benshi*/*byeonsa*, which designates a practice from the silent-cinema era where a voice performer narrated and commented on events that occurred on-screen, was decisive in forming early film–audience relationships and film culture in general in Korea. Korean and Japanese audiences had their own *byeonsa* and *benshi* who performed in their respective languages, which became a critical basis for the ethnic segregation at the cinema.

soothe the escalating Korean nationalism. Under the new slogans of '*Nissen Yūwa* (The Harmonious Relationship between Japan and Korea)' and '*Isshi Dōjin* (Universal Benevolence)' proclaimed by the third Governor-General Saito Makoto, the Cultural Rule loosened up Japan's military-based colonial policy by showing a certain degree of tolerance. The Cultural Rule was designed to give a measure of respect to Korea's traditions and customs; allow the freedom of communication and publication; get rid of inequality between Koreans and the Japanese; and open governmental positions to Koreans. Most importantly, the Cultural Rule replaced military police with a regular police force as a major mechanism of imperial governance, in order to alleviate the oppressive image of the militarism of Japanese colonial occupation.

In this regard, the word 'cultural' in 'Cultural Rule' was employed as opposed to 'militant' and thus it connoted 'placatory', 'peaceful', 'lenient' and 'civilized'. What is more striking about the Cultural Rule is the way in which the words 'culture' or 'cultural' are associated with assimilation. '*Yūwa*' could be roughly translated into English as 'harmony'; but '*wa*' means 'harmony' and '*yū*' actually means 'to melt down' or 'to become one'. So '*yūwa*' as a whole connotes to 'melt down together to become harmonious.' '*Isshi Dōjin*', another term representing the assimilation effort of the Cultural Rule, is a famous phrase from a classic Chinese poem by Han Yu (768–824) which deals with the virtue of benevolence to become a sage, and thus signifies equal care and love for the Japanese and Koreans.

On the surface the Cultural Rule purports to pledge a certain degree of autonomy for Koreans, but it actually aims at gradually turning the Koreans into 'the Japanese' through more sophisticated or 'cultural' ways of governing Korea and controlling colonial subjects, through its focus on assimilation. Hence the Cultural Rule was based on the contradictory notions of the differentiation and assimilation of the colonized population, reflecting the general politics of Japanese imperialism and translating its paradoxes into the practice of colonial rule in Korea. The internal discord of the assimilation ideology remained the unresolved dilemma for Japanese imperialism until its very end, even after the late 1930s when the empire administered more thorough and systematic assimilation policies, and this incompatibility was clearly inscribed upon every social sphere in Japan's colonies, like in Korea.

The symbiosis of Japanese and Korean film cultures and the ethnic segregation between the two in colonial Korea, especially in the colonial capital of Seoul, is indicative of the inherent problems of the Cultural Rule and the limitation and complexity of the empire's assimilation endeavours. Importantly, I argue that this paradoxical nature of the assimilation ideology was not incarnated on the colonial and/or imperial film cultures in Korea in random forms, but instead it manifested its specific patterns. To be specific, in terms of film exhibition, the law of segregation prevailed, while at the levels of film production and distribution the assimilation or integration between the colonizers and the colonized were much more apparent. However, until the early 1940s when the empire put every film industry under its direct control so that the collaboration between Japanese and Korean film-makers was not only encouraged but coercively enforced,[6] the

6. In May 1942, the Office of Governor-General closed down all the distribution companies in Korea, establishing Chōsen Eiga Haikyusha (Joseon Film Distribution Company) to distribute all the films. Soon all the film production companies were also closed down, and Chōsen Eiga Seichiku Kabushikigaisha (Joseon Film Production Corporation), which was created in September 1942, became the sole production company in Korea. With the establishment of these two state-owned film companies, the entire film business in Korea came under the direct control of the Office of the Governor-General (*Eiga Junpo* 1943a: 32–34; 1943b: 35–38).

'integrative' film-making practice relied on commercial markets rather than the political endeavours of the empire for assimilation. As explained earlier, the collaborations between Korean and Japanese film-makers in the field of film production in the 1920s and 1930s were done for commercial purposes on the business level. What is worse, these collaborative efforts were underplayed, often actively, by the very people who initiated and carried them out. The Japanese-owned film productions in Korea seemed to practice the assimilation principle of the empire but, as discussed, they pursued 'covert' co-production in the disguise of their Japanese origin and only catered to Korean spectators, which means that their collaborative plans was actually built on the segregated film cultures.

It was not until the mid-1930s that the ethnic segregation in movie theatres began to gradually disappear. The Japanese major film firms sought to expand their theatre chains into Korea: establishing, purchasing and managing theatres in Korea and, unlike the previous decades, Japanese movie theatres began to screen 'Korean' films in order to actively reach out to Korean audiences. As a result, Korean theatres lost patronage from Koreans to the upscale Japanese movie theatres. As of 1938, while the financially struggling Korean movie theatres were still dominated by Korean spectators who accounted for 80–90 per cent of their total patrons, Japanese movie theatres saw half of their clients were Koreans (Kim Ryeo-Sil 2006: 266). In the end, the ethnically separated film cultures and segregated film exhibition and film-viewing practices disappeared. It should be noted that these momentous changes in the film cultures in Korea beginning in the mid-1930s coincided more or less with the emergence of coercive assimilation policies that aggressively destroyed Korea's language, tradition, customs and culture. Japanese imperialism began to even more actively and thoroughly turn Koreans into imperial subjects. Thus the transformations in the colonial film cultures were associated with the shifts in imperial politics and modifications in the definition of 'Japanese-ness' and 'Korean-ness', which once again complicates the boundaries of Japanese and Korean national cinemas. It requires different theoretical and historiographical frameworks to adequately envisage the alterations in the film culture during the last decade of Japanese colonial rule and their historical, cultural and social implications and, for this reason, I believe the story of those drastic changes deserves its own extensive study.

To conclude this essay, I would like to present a compelling example that 'physically' represents the interrelated but at the same time segregated film cultures between the two ethnic audiences as well as a shared film history of the two national cinemas: 'a bicycle boy'. As only a single print was available for films screened at Korean and Japanese movie theatres separately, movie theatres located on either side of the Cheonggye Stream had to schedule the same film at different time slots in order to allow a bicycle boy to deliver the film's print, riding his bike, from a theatre in North Village to a theatre in South Village during the interval between the two screenings. In more extreme cases in which two theatres' screenings in North and South Village could not avoid overlapping, bicycle boys delivered the films reel by reel, as soon as they finished being projected at one theatre they would be shuttled to the others (Cho Poong-Yeon 1989: 154). This certainly unique practice exemplifies both the

segregation and connectivity between two film cultures, and also raises the question of the unclear boundaries between Korean and Japanese film histories and national cinemas. As it is difficult to determine to which film history or whose film culture these bicycle boys belong, it is almost impossible to neatly pinpoint where Korean cinema ends and Japanese cinema begins due to their complexly interwoven early film histories.

The question that begs to be asked here is whether the presence of Japanese culture, film-makers, distributors, exhibitors, *benshi*, movie theatres and audiences in Korea is part of a Japanese film history or a Korean film history. A critical study of Korean and Japanese national cinemas suggests that they do not belong to either. On the one hand, Korean film history, which is still firmly grounded in a nationalist historiography, easily dismisses this symbiosis as just yet another concession made to imperial exploitation. On the other hand, Japanese film history's overwhelming silence over Japan's decisive and distinctive presence in its former colonies' film cultures still remains largely intact. The lack of discussion of Japan's influence in colonial cinema is not a random choice but a part of the historical writing mechanism in post-war Japan that tends to mitigate its imperial past. As the complex coexistence of Japanese and Korean film cultures in colonial Korea demonstrates, the link and association between the two national cinemas during Japanese imperialism reveal the convoluted nature of early East Asian cinemas. A suppression or avoidance of historical materials and realities concerning the intertwinement of early Korean and Japanese film cultures and histories, therefore, leaves out the formative aspects of the region's film histories.

Notes

Throughout this essay, all Korean and Japanese names appear in the East Asian order of family name first. All translations from Japanese and Korean materials are mine.

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John Maynard Keynes

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Arirang, and the making of a national narrative in South and North Korea

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Abstract

Among the number of films that portrayed the reality of colonized Korea, Arirang *(1926) is widely considered to have especially evoked the fervour of Koreans for independence. This silent film was written and directed by Na Un Kyu, whose groundbreaking directorial and acting techniques contributed to the early development of Korean cinema. However, the eight-decade-long discussion about* Arirang *and its director reveals the strikingly ambiguous readings of those cultural texts that have been picked up by nationalist ideologies. On the one hand, there is no trace of the original text – the film has been lost since 1950. On the other, despite this textual inadequacy, the pre-emptive designation of* Arirang *as* minjok yŏnghwa *(nationalistic cinema) places it squarely within the nationalist paradigm. The politically construed genre of* minjok yŏnghwa, *applied by both North and South Korea, not only eliminates the possibility of looking at* Arirang *within the context of the cultural discourse of the period, it also legitimizes the textual status of the film, stifling questions under the heavy guard of institutionalized cultural policy. In short, a 'politicized' historical memory has been imposed upon a crucially significant cultural text.*

Keywords

Arirang
Japanese colonialism
nationalism
mental illness
pyŏnsa

As Henry H. Em points out, *minjok* (ethnicity) is a 'modern construct' (Shin and Robinson 1999: 337), which conceptualized the cultural unity of modern Korea at the turn of the twentieth century in response to external forces. Em's notion of ethnic unity took the basis of geopolitical unity of Korea, which presupposes the dialectical nature of identity politics imagined within Korean territory in response to external power. However, after the long period of cultural disconnection between the North and the South, it is necessary to re-evaluate the ubiquitous relationship between cultural unity and *minjok*, and simultaneously examine the concept of *minjok yŏnghwa* developed under such different political circumstances in each state. As the division between North and South was rooted in their colonial experience, discussions about *Arirang* not only embody the unifying memory of the two Koreas' past on a common historical vantage point; they also reveal the characteristics of each country's polity since 1945.

In this article, I investigate the images and narratives of the colonized through two written texts closely connected to the 'lost' film, *Arirang*; one a 'cinema novel', the other a movie script. The novel was published in 1929, three years after the film debuted, while the modified movie script was used for the remake of *Arirang* in 1957, directed by Kim Sodong in South Korea but subsequently viewed as the only textual

source by North Korea. It must be noted that neither of these written texts acknowledges the original writer/director, Na Un Kyu's involvement. In fact, the issue of authorship has not been seriously addressed in either the South or the North. I will argue that the lack of any interrogation of the textuality of *Arirang* is the result of the polarized domain of nationalist politics in both Koreas. Thus, the objective of this article is two-fold. First, I will analyse the two quasi-primary written texts as a way of exploring the cultural and artistic value of *Arirang*. Second, I will problematize the ambiguous authorship of *Arirang* in order to scrutinize the hegemonic system of knowledge production, which penetrates to the heart of the interpretation of cultural texts.

The story of *Arirang*

Despite the fact that the film disappeared shortly after Korea's liberation from Japan, there are a number of sources, including photographs, which suggest the artistic and cultural values inscribed in *Arirang*. Although fragmentary, those sources show a similar critique on *Arirang*'s realistic depiction of the economic conditions Koreans faced, and its appeal to traditional sentiment through its use of the beloved folk song, 'Arirang'. The most frequent criticism[1] concerns the nationalistic message that Na Un Kyu wanted to convey in the film. Although Na was conscious of the socio-political reality of Korea under Japanese occupation, his primary interest seemed to have been in the artistic and entertainment value cinema offered. Na wrote:

> Film must entertain people in an interesting and exciting way, so I felt it was necessary to incorporate the elements of humour and sorrow when making *Arirang*. Also, in order to draw viewers who have grown used to the spectacular effects of foreign movies, I tried to mobilize as many people as possible in the film. Thus, I recruited around 800 extras [...] *Arirang* was humorous and very dynamic in terms of its swiftly moving sequences. I tried to imitate some features from foreign films when making *Arirang*, and in fact, the mimicry satisfied the Korean audience.
>
> (Na Un Kyu, 'Anecdotes of Korean Film Directors: When I was making *Arirang*', *Chosŏn Yŏnghwa*, November 1936, cited in Cho Himun 2002: 205)

At least at the beginning of his directorial career, Na clearly saw the potential of film largely in terms of its value as an entertainment product rather than an ideological tool. By the same token, the kinds of features of foreign films he intended to 'mimic' in *Arirang* may help explain the aesthetic prevalence mediated between spectators and film-makers at that time.

Before analysing the 'cinema novel' written by Mun Il in 1929, let me say a word about this particular literary genre. The term 'cinema novel' broadly refers to the 'novelization' of film, though their overall length barely qualifies them as novels. The cinema novel *Arirang*, for example, was more like a pamphlet that summarized the story of the film in about 30 pages, with an attached musical score for the song, 'Arirang', and a few still cuts from the actual film (Kim Ryŏsil 2006: 248). Cinema novels were generally either published by daily newspapers in instalments in order to increase newspaper readership, or issued as separate volumes

1. This tendency is strongly apparent in the three most influential figures in Korean film history. See An Chonghwa's *Han'guk Yŏnghwa Pisa* (*Untold stories in Korean film history*), Yi Yŏngil's *Han'guk Yŏnghwasa Kangŭirok* (*Lecture notes on Korean film*) and Yu Hyŏnmok's *Han'guk Yŏnghwa Chŏnsa* (*History of Korean film*).

through a commercial collaboration between film distributors and publishing companies, an extension of their promotion of popular films. Their literary style tends to be inconsistent, frequently blurring the distinction between narration and dialogue. For example, the initial 'T', which indicates dialogue in the cinema novel, *Arirang*, is actually an intertitle used in silent film between shots. In short, the cinema novel was a hybrid form of literature that combined the characteristics of novelized film and movie script. Although a few movie critics attacked the genre for its commercial motivation (Kim Ryŏsil 2006: 247),[2] its literary deficiencies, and the fact that it often ignored the actual content of a film, the cinema novel is an interesting cultural phenomenon that reveals the popularity of film among the masses, as well as the strategic 'accommodation' which emerged to fulfil the audience's desire to experience cinema culture.

As noted earlier, Mun Il's 'literary' version of *Arirang* in the form of cinema novel does not mention Na's involvement, which has led Kim Ryŏsil (2006: 249) to argue that the publishing company, Pangmunsŏkwan, must have purchased the rights from Na. In addition, Mun Il was careful to accurately relate the plot of the film, emphasizing the fact that he had sought consultation from Sŏ Sangp'il, the owner of the theatre, Tansŏngsa, where *Arirang* premiered (Kim Sunam 2003: 53). Despite its limitations, I believe Mun's script is a useful way of evaluating Na's artistic ability as well as helping us see how he envisioned the value of film as a communication medium.

There are four main characters in *Arirang*: the madman, Ch'oe Yŏngjin; his friend, Yun Hyŏn'gu; the madman's sister, Ch'oe Yŏnghi; and the bad guy, Oh Kiho. Yŏngjin and Hyŏn'gu were college students in Seoul, but for some unknown reason, Yŏngjin comes back to his home town a madman during the school term while Hyŏn'gu stays in Seoul and continues his studies. Yŏngjin's father spends his days in despair because he had supported Yŏngjin's education by selling most of his property, and now is frequently harassed by his landlord for owing money. Kiho is a collecting agent for the landlord, who is hated by the villagers for his violent way of collecting the farmers' rent. Yŏnghi takes care of her brother, who no longer recognizes her. She is excited by the news of Hyŏn'gu coming back to the village because she has always secretly admired him. Hyŏn'gu comes back to the village, but is deeply saddened because Yŏngjin's mental condition has not improved.

Harvest season arrives and on the day of the harvest festival Kiho, who has failed to gain her father's permission to marry her, tries to rape Yŏnghi. Hyŏn'gu coincidentally passes by Yŏnghi's house and discovers them struggling. Hyŏn'gu and Kiho get into a vicious fight, which Yŏngjin happens to witness. To the unbalanced Yŏngjin, the fight looks like a wrestling match and he takes pleasure from watching it. Then, all of a sudden, Yŏngjin is drawn into hallucination. In his hallucinatory state, Yŏngjin sees a couple in a desert, and the couple are begging for water from a greedy merchant: Hyŏn'gu turns into a man who begs for water for his woman, Yŏnghi, and Kiho turns into a merchant trying to take the woman away from Hyŏn'gu in exchange for the water. Yŏngjin pities the couple, and starts fighting the merchant. The climax comes when Yŏngjin kills Kiho. When he sees blood on his hands, Yŏngjin returns to reality and

2. Sŏ Kwangje, for example, maintains that the cinema novel does not convey the form and content of film at all and added that it was a 'uniquely Korean phenomenon' revealing the backwardness of Korean film industry, cited in Kim Ryŏsil (2006: 247).

realizes that he has just committed murder. The final scene shows a handcuffed Yŏngjin crossing the *Arirang kogye* (Arirang hill) escorted by a Japanese policeman. The villagers send him off by singing Yŏngjin's favourite folk song, 'Arirang'.

No scene here directly deals with the conflicts derived from colonial rule. Yet people like the landlord and Oh Kiho were objects of hatred because they were seen as faithful collaborators with the Japanese. In fact, most peasants lived as tenant farmers, and starvation and financial difficulty were common among them. Also, most wealthy landlords were protected by the Japanese for land-control purposes. Someone like Yŏngjin's father, who spent all of his energy and assets on his son's education and future, gained much empathy from movie-goers, who identified themselves with him. Furthermore, there were occasions when the *pyŏnsa* (*byeonsa*; voicing actor/narrator), Sŏng Dongho, intentionally attributed the cause of Yŏngjin's madness to 'the torture Yŏngjin received from the Japanese for his participation in the independence movement in 1919' (quoted in Yi Yŏngil 2006: 30); a line not in the original script, which could only be added when no Japanese police were in the theatre.[3] The traditional music and dance used in the harvest festival as a collective art form is also an important aspect along with the song, which was apparently sung by the spectators in unison during the film viewing (Yi Yŏngil 2006: 31).

Despite the well-established scholarship on *Arirang* and Na's focus on the cultural dimensions of the colonial struggle, no serious textual investigation of the scenario has been attempted in either Korea mainly due to the absence of the film. I would like to point out a few places that speak to Na's ability as a writer and director as well as those literary and cinematic trends that might have influenced his film-making process. Let us look first at Yŏngjin's hallucinations, which appear twice in the cinema novel written in 1929. The desert landscape that Yŏngjin sees in his hallucinatory state could be taken to represent the barren landscape of the colonized, where the innocent virgin, Yŏnghi, is about to lose her chastity at the hands of the colonizer. Desert and madness here convey social reality as well as personal psychology. The image of the desert is a symbolic manifestation of the world of fantasy, with madness as the transcendental state where the two different 'realities' (i.e. reality and surreality) are perfectly united. I have no conclusive proof that Na consciously used the stylistic techniques of the Surrealists, although Korean writers and artists were well informed about the European art scene, but there is a striking resemblance to Surrealist technique in his strategy to use a madman's act of murder to point to the irreconcilable split between the world of the mind and physical reality.

It is noteworthy that Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* debuted in Japan in 1919 and in Korea in 1922 (Yi Yŏngil 2006: 90). Wiene's film caused a great sensation among Japanese avant-garde artists, especially the Shinkankakuha (neo-Sensualist school), who drew from European modernism in their artistic explorations during the early 1920s. Although the literal meaning of the name of their school appears to align it with European neo-Impressionism, its members actually explored a wide range of modernist styles, Expressionism and Surrealism being particularly

3. Yi Yŏngil (2006: 30). Usually, Japanese policemen were supposed to supervise every film viewing and theatrical performance during the colonial period.

prevalent in their experiments with film (Peterson 1989: 38). Kinugasa Teinosuke's *Page of Madness* (1926), for example, was a product of the collaboration between Kinugasa and the most famous Shinkankakuha writer, Kawabata Yasunari. The images of the world perceived by a mentally ill character in the *Page of Madness* were received well by critics at that time, and Kinugasa mentioned that *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* had particular influence on his film (Sharp 2004: 16). Korean writers of the 1920s were also heavily influenced by European modernism via Japan, since many Korean students studied foreign languages and literature in major metropolitan cities in Japan. Inasmuch as Na was familiar with European literary/cinematic styles, he was likely to have been well informed about the film world in Japan. Hence an interpretation of the use of hallucination and madness in *Arirang* should not be solely limited to the 'strategic' portrayal of the desire of expressing the psyche of the colonial subject, as An (1998: 105) argues; it should also incorporate the broader exploration of the personal psychology of a modern subject that had been aesthetically pathologized in art and literature.

The last scene, where people sing 'Arirang' as Yŏngjin is taken away by the police, is a crucial moment, a conversion of mood that turns the audience from spectators to participants. This dramatic shift signifies that the madman's empty words are given meaning and carried forward by the people. The song functions as a dialogue in the form of melody. Na's cinematic language connected individual and communal psychology by encompassing cultural variants inherent in Korea at that time. Furthermore, the dialogue is enacted through the language of the marginalized, which challenges the 'universal' language (i.e. Japanese). The song embodies the communal identity of Koreans while simultaneously establishing a cultural site where collective resistance is reinforced through non-violent acts. Since *Arirang* was a silent film, a recording of the song was played, often followed by the *pyŏnsa*'s theatrical dramatization at the climax. In other words, the empathetic moment was heightened by the *pyŏnsa*, one of the significant elements to be considered when determining the textuality of the film.

The North Korean version of the script shows some striking changes compared to the 1929 novel, although the overall story remains the same. First, it directly connects Yŏngjin's madness to his torture by the Japanese for his involvement in the 1919 independence movement. Second, the role of Yŏngjin's village teacher, Pak, becomes important; he is an educator, who teaches youngsters about Korean tradition and culture. Third, a more elaborate description of the harvest festival is included along with the strengthened presence of the masses. In fact, the stress on the masses has long been an important element in North Korean cinema since it underlies the collective mode of cultural production. Fourth, while the 1929 version begins with the confrontation between Yŏngjin and Kiho, the North Korean version starts with a postman approaching the village with the news that the promising young man, Hyŏn'gu, the future leader of the community, is coming back to his home town. Yŏngjin also leaves with a few words for his friend, implying that resistance against the Japanese will be continued. Finally, the presence of Japanese police officers is palpable: police patrol the village frequently, and their close relationship

with the landlord shows the exploitive nature of colonialists and their collaborators. It must be recalled here that the North Korean version is, in fact, a modified scenario adapted from the remake of *Arirang* in 1957 in South Korea. Although North Korea is defiant before this fact of 'borrowing', its changes resonate with their cultural policies in the emphasis on collective art forms, and the *hangil* (resistance against Japanese imperialism) element that forms the backbone of their ideology.

The North Korean co-authors of the book, *Na Un Kyu and His Films*, do not specify the source of the script, referring to the director as 'a pioneer of nationalistic cinema', and claiming that Na's intention in this particular film was to reflect the harsh reality of the peasants under colonial rule (Ch'oe and Hong 1999/2002: 107). Ch'oe and Hong in North Korea interpret '*Arirang kogye*' (Arirang hill) as an imaginary hill of hardship that had to be crossed by the people of Chosŏn; it transcends its mythological function by embracing the peasants' class consciousness as well as nationalistic elements (Ch'oe and Hong 1999/2002: 208). Although there are some disparities between North and South Korea in terms of biographical information about the director as well as the nature of the directorship of the film, we should recall that both categorized *Arirang* as *minjok yŏnghwa* (nationalistic cinema).

In fact, Na is one of only a few artists that both North and South Korea consider historically important. As Cho Himun argues, Na has been praised by both Koreas because he was relatively free of any specific ideology at a time – 1925–35 – when the conflict between leftist and rightist groups in the art world was acute (Ch'oe and Hong 1999/2002: 349). Na Un Kyu showed little interest in politics or particular ideologies while producing his works. Rather, he was a practical realist who believed it was more beneficial to work with the financial backing of Japanese distributors and producers, who could draw more people into movie theatres. However, as Cho points out, it is the 'ideology free' aspect of Na that made the manipulation of him as a national hero possible. In other words, the representation of Na and his film, *Arirang*, have been shaped through the different ideologies that make up the ambiguous concept of *minjok yŏnghwa*.

Yi Yŏngil (1931–2001) argued that *Arirang* was the first Korean film that strongly reflected Korean nationalism (Yi Yŏngil 2006: 29). He wrote that 'the awareness of Korean nationalism was apparent in the film industry at that time [...] *Arirang* depicted the regional character of Korean society with its rural background. I should call the tendency shown in this film as nationalistic realism' (Yi Yŏngil 2006: 33). According to his brief analysis, *Arirang* is *minjok yŏnghwa* because it portrayed a nationalistic (i.e. anti-Japanese) tendency and expressed the 'regional' character of Korea through its use of folk music. Clearly, the film generated feelings of antipathy towards colonial rule; yet the assertion that folk culture forms the homogeneous cultural character of Korea needs to be investigated further. Yi's assumption of homogeneity is an attempt to reduce cultural identity to something objectively clear and tangible; it is a simplified version of the nationalist politics of culture that conveniently identifies a single tradition as the authentic and genuine cultural origin or legitimacy of the Korean people. In fact, this particular period overlaps with the emergence of Korean folklore

scholarship pioneered by Ch'oe Namsŏn and Yi Nŭnghwa, who tried to establish the 'uniqueness' of Korean culture in its indigenous tradition (Janelli 1986: 24), and the film adaptation of Korean folk tales such as *Ch'unhyangjŏn* and *Simch'ŏngjŏn*. These films were far more popular than films produced by proletarian cinema groups, whose aim was to influence the masses with socialistic ideas. At the same time, as Robinson points out in *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea 1920–1925*, the movement to construct cultural identity led by nationalist intellectuals after the March First Movement (1919) was losing its momentum around 1925 due to its failure to gain support from the masses, and the strong opposition from socialist groups. As Yi points out, if Na's utilization of folk song conveys the 'regional character' of Korea, the popularity of *Arirang* the film should be understood for its embodiment of cultural variants associated with the song 'Arirang' that evolved amid the dialectic of colonial rule and anti-colonial struggle. While its etymology varies, there is no linguistic designation specific to the term '*arirang*'. Rather, the usage of the regionally distinctive oral tradition incorporated in the film demonstrates the fluidity of cultural expression of the colonized by placing their indigenous language against the central language (i.e. Japanese). While it is unclear whether Na actually directed the film or not, an issue I will discuss later, it is evident that the owner of the production, the distributor and most of the technical staff (let alone the film technology) were Japanese. In other words, by ignoring the systematic and structural nature of the film industry at that time, Yi was able to emphasize the nationalistic content of the film and the supposedly nationalistic thought of the director. Audience reception and the character of the industry are also important elements when considering a film's genre; yet, Yi inclined towards the creative ability of the nationalistic 'genius' as the genre's fundamental attribute. As Kim Haksu rightly points out, the *minjok yŏnghwa* was initially established by a small group of people in the film industry including An Chonghwa, who worked with Na. An has been especially important in the Korean film community because he continuously directed films after 1945, worked as an administrator for major cultural organizations and influenced a great number of film directors after the Korean War.

An Chonghwa's book, *Han'guk Yŏnghwa Ch'ŭkmyŏn Pisa* (*Untold Stories in Korean Film History*) first published in 1962, is a valuable historical account of Korean film, which includes An's interactions with Na and experience in the film industry during the colonial period. No history book published before An's covered such a broad range of topics in Korean cinema from 1910 to 1945. In it, An emphasizes the nationalistic elements found in *Arirang*. As he wrote:

> *Arirang* starts with the scene called 'cat and dog', which reveals the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. In other words, it shows the reality of Koreans who lived under the colonial rule of the Japanese. Thus, it was an ingenious idea to make the protagonist a madman since any direct expression of nationalistic tendencies was impossible [...] As a result, the spectators felt a nationalistic consciousness arising in their hearts, and shared feelings of injustice.
>
> (An 1998: 105–06)

An added that Na was a 'genius', who was able to write his script without running the dangerous risk of being attacked by Japanese censors. Nor did his praise of Na stop there; he related a number of anecdotes depicting Na's ingenuity, from his writing ability and acting to his directorship. Although An's accounts were written based on his own experience, there are many historical errors found throughout the book.[4] His praise of Na's ability to play the multiple roles of director, actor, producer and writer, to some extent, had more to do with the small-scale industry, where systematic labour division was almost impossible due to the lack of capital and scarcity of professionally trained staff; working conditions that lasted without significant change up until the late 1930s.[5] It is also noteworthy that Na's later films received harsh criticism for lacking innovative directorial techniques. For example, the two sequels of *Arirang* (*Arirang 2* in 1930 and *Arirang 3* in 1936) were disappointing to many critics and spectators. The critic, Nam Kung Ok, for example, attacked Na for the repetition and exaggerated scenes of murders, madness and imprisonment (Nam 1930). And even in his eulogy for Na, Sŏ Kwang Chae, writing in *Chokwang*, October 1937) criticized Na for making 'slipshod pieces of work' in later years by recycling features taken from *Arirang* in other films (quoted in Chong 1997: 217).

Nonetheless, An's reasons for upholding the film as *minjok yŏnghwa* were similar to Yi's. However, An's most important anecdote requires special attention; namely that, Na submitted the name of the director of *Arirang* as Kim Ch'angsŏn. Who was Kim Ch'angsŏn? According to An, Na was worried about the censorship issue so he put down as director one of the production's key figures, Tsumori Hidegatsu, whose Korean name was Kim Ch'angsŏn. Tsumori Hidegatsu was, in fact, a nephew of the owner of the Chosŏn Kinema Production, Yōdo Dorajo, who financed *Arirang* – other than this fact, no further biographical detail is known about Tsumori. As An argued, Na might have used this tactic to avoid problems with the censors, believing that he 'could avoid censorship if the Japanese believed that the director was Japanese when submitting the script to the Japanese Governor-General of Korea' (An 1998: 104).

The directorship of *Arirang*

The directorship of *Arirang* went unquestioned until 1995, when Cho Himun argued that Tsumori, in fact, could have been the real director. Cho's claim created a controversy, which motivated the Korean film community to look at the legend of Na and his *Arirang* from a completely different angle. Cho provided three main pieces of evidence to support his claim (Kim Haksu 2002: 73–74). First, there is no record that *Arirang* was ever a serious target of censorship: in fact, it was released in its entirety unlike many other films that had gone through substantial cutting before public viewing. The only record found to date regarding the censorship of 'nationalistic' content was the order to remove some phrases of the song 'Arirang' printed on the movie leaflet (Chŏng Chonghwa 1997: 30). Second, all the sources published at that time indicate that the director of *Aririang* was Tsumori. True, Na claimed that he himself was the real director in 1937. However, as Cho points out, it is puzzling that Na did not reveal his role for ten years. Na gained much popularity because of the

4. These errors have been corrected in the latest version of An's book by the film archivist, Kim Chongwook.

5. When Sŏ Kwang Chae asserted the importance of the division of labour in the film industry, An Chonghwa complained that what Sŏ wanted to establish in the Korean film industry was only an idealized dream (*Sin Dong-A*, January 1939).

success of *Arirang*, and even established his own film production company in 1927 with the financial resources he gained from the film. Last, Cho found out that *Arirang* was released in Hokkaido in 1942 as a part of entertainment programme for Korean miners. Cho argues that *Arirang* could not have been shown in Japan if its 'anti-Japanese' content was apparent. This last claim, however, can be refuted since the political overtones of the story might have been manipulated by skilful *pyŏnsa* who could eliminate any 'anti-Japanese' sentiment. In fact, one of the advantages of silent film in the colonial situation was that it enabled *pyŏnsa* to change the emotional tone of a film spontaneously while avoiding the danger of being censored. Thus, when sound films or 'talkies' were introduced to colonial Korea, movie-makers were ambivalent. One proletarian artist, Pak Wansik, for example, was deeply concerned about the talkies' inability to challenge authority and censorship. He argued that the silent film, with its *pyŏnsa*, was a more desirable form of cinema than the talkie in terms of its ability to create a certain mood (i.e. anti-Japanese sentiment) for its native audience (Yi Hwa-Jin 2005: 22).

Nonetheless, these criticisms suggest that learning more about Tsumori's activities could logically lead towards determining the true directorship of *Arirang*. For example, Tsumori's name appeared again in 1927 as the director of *A Bull With No Horns*, which stressed the consciousness of the working class, and criticized the exploitation of labour imposed on Korean miners by Japanese capitalists. It is not clear whether Tsumori was interested in making 'tendency films' – i.e. films that contain socialistic ideas – since few references about him can be found after that time (Cho Himun 2002: 203). In short, Tsumori, like other Japanese film workers who played vital roles in the Korean film industry, stands as a blind spot when looking at the bigger picture of Korean film history.[6]

Despite the insufficiency of the materials to support Na's claim of directorship, Kim Haksu (2002: 74–76) argues that the making of *Arirang* as *minjok yŏnghwa* and Na as a nationalistic hero has been carefully established by a group of people regarded as 'pro-Japanese' in South Korea. This irony is the direct result of the strong anti-Japanese sentiment that swept through the entire nation when Korea gained its sovereignty back in 1945. There was nothing more timely than cleaning up the 'shameful experience' of Korea's colonial past for the newly established government in order to build solidarity among the people. The manipulation of anti-Japanese sentiment was highly practical for political parties and politicians like Rhee Syngman, who publicized his involvement in Korea's independence movement to gain popularity.

Yet when the Republic of Korea was established in 1948, major positions in the Rhee administration were filled with officers who had enjoyed political and economic privileges under the colonial system. Part of the reason for the extension of their privileges was the fact that the Rhee administration needed to draw experienced politicians and financial supporters from those who had established their careers and financial resources under the Japanese occupation. In addition, the US Army Military Government in Korea (1945–48, hereafter USAMGIK) selected Korean political advisors regardless of their past involvements. This kind of continuity of power was also apparent in the film industry, the best

6. According to *Tong A Daily* (22 December 1927) Tsumori was involved in the production of two films, *Kŭ ŭi Pansaeng* (*Half His Life*) and *Ttŭn Sesang* (*Floating World*) although these were not completed. Tsumori's activities after 1927 are largely unknown, except for a record in the *Kinema Junpo* (1 January 1938) reporting that he was working in Tienjin as the president of the film distribution company Ōasa Kinema, by 1938 (Cho Himun 2002: 203).

example being An Chonghwa, the author of the aforementioned *Untold Stories of Korean Film History*.

An became one of the important members of the Chosŏn Film committee in 1945, which was under the direct control of the USAMGIK. Kim reports that most members, including An, were involved in producing Japanese propaganda films during the Pacific War. Yet the imminent task of the committee was 'cleaning up the remnants of Japanese imperialism' (Kim Haksu 2002: 147). The inclusion of An on the committee indicates that the process of 'cleaning up' started out with no concrete standards to determine prior *ch'in-il* (pro-Japanese) activities. In addition, the USAMGIK's censorship regulations were not much different from those of the Japanese; filmmakers had to get permission before entering the production process, and movie scripts had to undergo severe censorship review. The main target of USAMGIK surveillance was the cultural activities of leftists. As a consequence, Soviet films were banned for public viewing, while documentary films demonstrating America's military power, along with Hollywood films, were widely distributed (Kim Tong-Ho et al. 2005: 110–17).

Due to the economic downturn and the strict censorship, only 33 films were made in South Korea between 1946 and 1948. Besides the newly made films, the USAMGIK allowed theatres to screen films produced during the colonial period; and *Arirang* and its two sequels were particularly well received (Cho Hye-Jung 2008). The political significance of the USAMGIK's special interest in re-releasing *Arirang* lies in its anti-Communism agenda. In other words, the general reception of the film as anti-colonial was effectively instrumentalized under the rubric of nationalism, which, in the military administration's calculation, could evoke a unitary sense of the nation among people in the South. The only difference within the ideological fabrication of nationalism in the cultural sphere under the US military administration was that the propagation of national urgency was focused on 'the emergence of a new enemy' (i.e. the Communists), replacing the Japanese. The USAMGIK defined film as 'a very useful medium that can fulfil cultural, economic and political purposes' (Kim Tong-Ho et al. 2005: 114) and its aestheticized politics through the use of cultural artefacts such as *Arirang* helped replace anti-Japanese sentiment with anti-Communism in South Korea around the time of Korean War.

It is not surprising that someone like Park Chung-Hee was able to keep his presidency for such a long time using his anti-Communist propaganda despite having fought against Koreans as a Japanese military officer in Manchukuo. Indeed, it was this chasm between social disorder and ideology that enabled people like An to exercise unbroken power by embellishing his 'nationalistic' past while concealing his 'pro-Japanese' activities. In fact, An's emphasis on his friendship with Na, his stress on Na's and *Arirang*'s 'nationalistic' character, and his omission of any significant references to Japanese film workers suggest that the objective of An's book was to 'convince' rather than to inform. This kind of 'concealment' or 'rewriting' of personal history through creative and scholarly work has been also prevalent in literature. Right after Korea regained its sovereignty from Japan, some writers 'revised' their previous works and published them again fearing that their 'pro-Japanese content' would lead to dispute and controversy (Yi Sang-Kyŏng et al. 2004: 83–84).

The recognition of Na in North Korea

In North Korea, the first book designating Na as the founder of *minjok yŏnghwa* appeared in 1961 (Ch'oe and Hong 1999/2002: 363). The overall critique of Na's *Arirang* in this book follows the theoretical trajectory of the aesthetics of socialist realism. The most recent publication on Na, *Na Un Kyu and His Films*, is relatively extensive compared to earlier published materials in its detailed biographical information and its interviews with numerous people who worked closely with Na. The co-authors of the book, Ch'oe Ch'angho and Hong Kangsŏng, provide a lengthy description of Na's involvement in the independence movement noting that Na, in fact, was imprisoned for two years for his involvement in the Army for Chosŏn's Independence in Manchuria (*Manju Chosŏn Tongnip Kunsa Hakkyo*). Ch'oe and Hong's book consistently coheres to the aesthetics of socialist realism, which is closely tied to the theory of *juche.*

The basic 'guidelines' of socialist realism laid down by Kim Il Sung (Kim Il-Sŏng) – that is the use of nationalistic forms with socialistic content – stayed the same until the late 1950s, when North Korea started to be politically isolated from the USSR. In the late 1950s, something called *urisik sahoejŭi* (our style of socialism) appeared, and eventually became a theoretical foundation of *juche*. The fundamental change in *urisik sahoejuŭi* is the emphasis on *hangil* (resistance against Japanese imperialism), which differentiated the nationalistic character of North Korea from that of other socialist countries. At the same time, Kim Il Sung's activities as the leader of the *hangil* partisans between 1926 and 1945 were made the most important subject matter for art and literature, while a national project of collecting information about *hangil* activities in Manchuria was initiated in 1953. In other words, the emphasis on *hangil* was intended to establish Kim Il Sung as the embodiment of North Korean sovereignty.

Na's *Arirang* fits into the aesthetics of socialist realism in its depiction of the political consciousness of peasants within a social content, the use of popular 'nationalistic' forms of culture such as the folk song and dance, and the portrayal of the masses. Moreover, Na's patriotic activities in Manchuria enhanced the shaping of the meta-narrative of Korean spirit against Japanese imperialism. It is interesting that the term, *minjok yŏnghwa*, is also used in North Korean sources. Ch'oe and Hong wrote:

> *Arirang* established the aesthetics of our cinema art with its strongly critical type of socialism [...] It reflects Korean tradition and spirit, and shows empathy for peasants who suffered from colonialism [...] Na's progressive films after *Arirang* contributed to the enlightenment of culture [...] However, many Korean films produced between 1921 and 1936 underwent severe Japanese censorship, although 15 years of hardship could not stop our people from making *minjok yŏnghwa*.
>
> (Ch'oe and Hong 1999/2002: 120, 200)

In North Korea, Na's directorship of *Arirang* has remained unchallenged. Rather, Ch'oe and Hong firmly refute the possibility of Tsumori being the director by providing evidence collected from interviewees. According to Ch'oe and Hong's analysis, the achievements of *Arirang* as *minjok yŏnghwa* are first, it elevated people's patriotic attitude by depicting the harsh

realities of colonial rule; second, mutual collaboration among the villagers enhanced their love for their country; third, the relatively large number of extras recruited for the film reflected the collective strength of peasants; and fourth, the folk song 'Arirang' gained popularity for the film through its appeal to Korean tradition.

One of the strengths of Ch'oe and Hong's book is the inclusion of interviews with key individuals who worked closely with Na. Some are actors and writers, whose memories fit well within the book's overall agenda to emphasize Na's patriotic attitude as well as the *hangil* elements in his films. Na's childhood friend, Ch'oe Sŏnggi, recalls the innate talent of young Na Un Kyu as a writer and actor. The interviews with Kim Yŏnsil, the well-known actress who appeared in many of Na's films, occupy considerable space throughout the book; basically, she supports Na's patriotism through recollecting her conversations with him. In other words, the portrait of Na as these interviewees 'remember' him seems to have been executed according to how they 'ought to remember' him. Although the purpose of interviews may have been to give a true account of Na's biography, the definition of *minjok yŏnghwa* as a genre is ideologically predetermined because its theoretical ground is fundamentally rooted in the class consciousness of the peasants while excluding other classes as members of Korean *minjok*. The redundancy of using the ideology of *hangil* parallels the ideology of *juche*, which was disseminated from 1967 on by the North Korean Communist Party.

Juche iron (theory of self-reliance) and *Arirang*

As Kim Il Sung purged his political opponents – including artists and writers – in the 1950s, his image as the everlasting 'great leader' was solidified with the introduction of *juche* ideology. This was also the time when Kim Jong Il first began to involve himself in cultural production. Thereafter, the use of popular art forms in generating state propaganda was facilitated by Kim Jong Il's increasingly important role. Nonetheless, Kim Jong Il tried hard to acquire the copy of *Arirang* from Abe Yoshishige, the Japanese collector who claimed to possess the film. Abe had never opened his secret vault but presented to people a 'list' of films that included *Arirang*. At some point, he intensified speculation by boldly stating that he could hand over the film only if the Japanese emperor received an official request from the then South Korean president, Kim Dae Jung. It turned out, however, that his dubious play with the media was a mere farce.[7]

Arirang is today regarded in North Korea as an exemplary artwork that depicts the collective consciousness of *hangil*. Yet its cultural and artistic values have been glossed over with *juche munye iron* (the *juche* theory of art). It maintains that, first, North Korean political autonomy must be emphasized. Second, it holds that the three fundamental elements that constitute socialist realism – one's loyalty for the Communist Party (*Tangsŏng*), class consciousness (*Kyekŭpsŏng*), and empathy for and among people (*Imminsŏng*) – must be reflected. Third, cultural productions should preserve traditional sensitivities. Fourth, the importance of Kim Il Sung and his ideas should be reflected directly and indirectly. Fifth and last, artists must direct their imagination towards the betterment of North Korea

7. Abe Yoshishige had claimed possession of the legendary film together with over sixteen other Korean films produced during the colonial period. It was said that Abe was able to collect these historically invaluable Korean films through his father, who was a residential doctor of the Japanese governor-general of Korea. After his death in 2005, his 'collection' was moved to the Tokyo Film Centre for examination and cataloguing, but soon it was announced by the Centre that none of the Korean films were found in Abe's archives (*Han'gyŏre Daily 2005; Korean Broadcasting Company* 2007).

as a socialist country. These five principles have seriously limited the freedom of expression as well as the creative vision of North Korean artists and writers. Although *Arirang* does not fulfil all the characteristics of *juche*, we see an emotionally charged description of the film interwoven with the kernel of *juche* ideology in Ch'oe and Hong's book (1999/2002: 212).

> Na Un Kyu's dream to create his art freely was fulfilled through his numerous friends, who came to this republic of happiness (North Korea) to live a new life. They have been pouring out their creative energy and talents on the hill of self-reliance under the warm care of our dear leader (Kim Jong Il), who is the master of *juche yŏnghwa* (juche films).

Na's 'friends', in fact, were mostly members of the Korea Artista Proleta Federatio (KAPF) (1925–35). Na was not interested in becoming a member of this socialist organization; on the contrary, he had a confrontational relationship with the Federation because he did not believe that art should serve a political purpose. Furthermore, movie critics belonging to the Federation often attacked Na's lack of 'class consciousness' as well as his flamboyant lifestyle. Despite this historical account, Ch'oe and Hong (1999/2002: 178) argue to the contrary that Na and the members of KAPF maintained a 'mutual relationship'. The reason why Ch'oe and Hong insist that Na was not a target of criticism by KAPF members was because the tradition of North Korean art and literature is based on the socialist aesthetics of the KAPF. Thus, it seems to have been necessary for North Korea to embrace Na under the umbrella of KAPF in order to align the 'great figure' in Korean film history with a socialist ideology.

Thus each country uses the concept of *minjok yŏnghwa* in different contexts to ascertain the legitimacy of its ethnic unity in different interpretations of their historical past. In the North, it has been theoretically supported by a *juche* ideology that stresses the class consciousness embedded in films. Inasmuch as 'anti-Japanese' embodies the self-reliant spirit of Koreans, anti-American films can also be categorized as *minjok yŏnghwa* in the North. In the South, on the other hand, such a dichotomy between *minjok* and anti-*minjok* is trapped in the blurred boundaries of a nationalism that fails to sufficiently address South Korean cultural identity in a global context.

Conclusion

Mechanical modes of cultural production restructure human perception across the world through their ability to objectify living communities on a global scale. Film, in particular, not only visualizes the reality of people living within a particular set of geographical borders but also reifies cultural character, which manifests the identity of individuals or communities through creative means. As Walter Benjamin (1985: 232) observed, actors in films do not perform for themselves but for spectators, who imagine their identity to be reproduced on screen. In other words, a movie screen functions as a liberal space where people participate in the process of legitimizing their subjectivity by identifying themselves with actors. Benjamin (1985: 232) warned, however, of the 'illusion-promoting'

propensity of film, which can readily be deployed to proliferate hegemonic ideology. The fine line between art and politics, in fact, is the boundary where cultural expression is negotiated. The very vulnerability of film to nationalist politics also confirms its power to subvert particular ideologies.

Constructions of *Arirang* as national narrative take as their specific historical starting point the period of 'resistance against Japanese imperialism'. As the North has been governed by dictators since the Korean War, so the South was under military dictatorship until 1993. Much as artists and writers in the North suffered from severe censorship and control, people in South Korea could not enjoy freedom of expression under their dictatorship. In these politically demarcated cultural spaces, the theme of *hangil* has been the 'sacred' spot where the representation of ethnic unity could be sustained. The deployment of nationalistic ideology is thus inherent in the interpretation of cultural production. In the South, the concept of *minjok yŏnghwa* has been broadly applied to films containing nationalistic ideas without much interrogation of the cultural significance of folk art, as shown in *Arirang*. In the North, *minjok yŏnghwa* explicitly refers to films produced by and for the proletarian class (i.e. the peasants in *Arirang*) that clearly convey their political struggle.

The most obvious problem found within these narratives is that *Arirang* has been so long discussed with insufficient textual validity. Pre-emptive epistemologies of national narrative have forced the interpretation of text to the periphery, while the opportunity to perceive the identity of a modern subject has been silenced by the homogenizing politics of memory. The destruction of silent and early sound films during the politically unstable period cannot be reversed. However, an independent analysis of *Arirang* must take a different path in order to imagine and investigate the cultural experience of the masses. The role of the *pyŏnsa*, for example, is one of the key elements that determine the textuality of Korean silent film, not in a single but in multiple forms, since the *pyŏnsa*'s performance could create vastly different moods in different situations. It is said that some *pyŏnsa* even prepared several versions of their narrative to be used for different groups of spectators. In the case of *Arirang*, the aforementioned *pyŏnsa*, Sŏng, had at least two versions: one used when Japanese policemen were in the theatre, and the other when the theatre was filled by a Korean audience only (Kim Ryŏsil 2006: 263). The antipathy towards the Japanese that Koreans felt during a performance derived from the *pyŏnsa*'s manipulation and theatrical gestures that heightened the feeling of injustice under colonial rule, not through a clear *hangil* content inscribed in the film. As Kim Ryŏsil (2006: 265) points out, it could be argued that the *hangil* narrative was constructed by the *pyŏnsa*; *Arirang* was rather 'imagined' as a *hangil* film by the spectators whose desire for political freedom and economic betterment shaped what they 'saw' on the screen. The collective imagining of independence in the particular cultural site that was the movie theatre was formed through the *pyŏnsa*'s methodology of narrating reality of colonial Korea. In addition, discursive readings of film texts should be done within the

cross-cultural discourse since the close relationship between literature and film, for example, is an important angle to investigate artistic inspiration, audience expectations and practical choices that had to be carefully measured and negotiated by a colonial subject when making a meaningful utterance under the given circumstances.

Notes

I have rendered Korean names in the original order, surname first. I have followed the modified McCune-Reischauer system for romanizing Korean words and names except for a few well-established cases, such as *juche* and Kim Il Sung. All translations in the article are my own.

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The new waves at the margin: an historical overview of South Korean cinema movements 1975–84

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Abstract

The current western historiography on South Korean cinema has centred around two specific eras: the 1960s that celebrated the 'Golden Age' of the national cinema; and the 1990s onwards, which is reputed to launch New Korean Cinema. This essay will examine South Korean cinema in the relatively mute period from the mid 1970s through the early 1980s. Defying the conventional reference to this decade as the 'Dark Age' of South Korean cinema, this work will illuminate a stream of domestic film movements, which arose at the time to awaken the national cinema to artistic and realistic consciousness. For the illustration of the film movements, I will discuss the activities of the Visual Age Group (1975–78), the Cultural Centre Generation (1977–80) and the Small Film Festival (1984). The film movements marked the genesis of the new wave consciousness in South Korean film history. And they extensively subscribed to international film new waves in order to rearticulate them within the South Korean context. The study of these three movements will also illuminate the conditions for the later appearance of the Independent Cinema movement.

Keywords

Korean cinema 1970s
Korean cinema 1980s
Visual Age Group
Cultural Centre Generation
Small Film Festival

The 1960s is often considered to be the 'Golden Age' of South Korean cinema while its following decade is usually considered as the 'Dark Age' of South Korean cinema. The fact that the 1960s maintained a substantial growth in the number of films produced and audiences while the 1970s went exactly in the opposite direction may be the ground for this view.

Another characteristic that places the former period in the limelight is the broad range of experimental genres that appeared during the 1960s. Director Yu Hyun-Mok's *An Aimless Bullet* (*Obalt'an*, 1961), for example, attested to the existence of genuine native realism in South Korean cinema by depicting the poverty and hopelessness of the nation after the Korean War. Director Kim Ki-Young's *The Housemaid* (*Hanyŏ*, 1960), on another hand, presents virulent sexual fantasies sustained by hybrid stylistics that 'act out the psychological angst and anxiety behind the nation's rapid pace of industrialization' (Kim Kyung-Hyun 2004: 208). Indeed, both film-makers kept expanding their styles – realism and modernism respectively – in the ensuing decades, but the origin of their creativities is rooted in the vibrant atmosphere of the 1960s.

Year	Number of Films Produced	Year	Number of Films Produced
1960	92	1970	231
1961	86	1971	202
1962	113	1972	122
1963	144	1973	125
1964	147	1974	141
1965	189	1975	94
1966	136	1976	134
1967	172	1977	101
1968	212	1978	117
1969	229	1979	96

Table 1: The number of film production in the 1960s and in the 1970s.[1]

1. The formation of this table is based on the numerical information from Park Ji-Yeon (2004: 153, 178).

The 1970s, however, marked a period of low-quality films, which in turn earned a blanket title of 'dark age' (Jang Mi-Hee 2001: 188). Such deprecating labels refer to the many tear-jerking melodramas, misogynistic barmaid (or 'hostess') films and action films produced at this time containing prosaic anti-communist overtones. First released in 1968, *Love Me Once Again* (*Miwŏdo tasi hanbŏn*, Jung So-Yong, 1968) made a prototypical South Korean family melodrama and continued to add three more sequels in 1969, in 1970 and in 1971, testifying an enduring appeal of tearjerker to South Korean audiences (Lee Ho-Geol 2004: 91). Although it started as a serious portrayal on the dark side of society like *Heavenly Homecoming of the Stars* (*Byŏldŭleu Gohyang*, Lee Jang-Ho, 1974), social realism films in the 1970s gradually gave way to a series of the so-called 'hostess films' that exploited the afflicted lives of barmaids and prostitutes in the narratives (Lee Ho-Geol 2004: 96). During the same period, *Testimony* (*Chŭngŏn*, Yim Kwon-Taek, 1974) led off the production of the action films with anti-communist themes. Essentially, three groups are responsible for the demise of the national cinema's aesthetic originality and commercial vivacity: the military regime of Park Chung-Hee that kept rigid control over the film sector, the industry greedily seeking profit through the acquisition of the foreign film import quotas granted by the government, and the advent of television broadcasting in the realm of popular culture, which in turn caused a decrease in the number of movie-goers.

However, the differences between the two decades described above does not necessarily come from a 'film movement' (McHugh and Abelman 2005: 2) in which auteuristic works such as Yu Hyon-Mok's and Kim Ki-Young's films were dominant. In other words, while a few experimental movies received attention for their creativity and originality, they were not the typical movies produced in the 1960s. In 1969, for instance, out of 229 film productions in total, 103 were melodramas and 55 were action films (Yi Hyo-In 2004: 32–33). As such, the heyday of South Korean cinema more closely resembles the Classical Hollywood Studio era (1920s–1940s) rather than, say, Italian neo-realism. As was the case with studio-era Hollywood, the South Korean 'Golden Age' of cinema also enjoyed an uncontested monopoly

on mass culture, even to the point that cheap quickies and blatant plagiarism of Japanese films barely faced public protest or legal consequences (Yi Hyo-In 2004: 32–37). Under these circumstances, films such as *An Aimless Bullet* and *The Housemaid* stand out as a few notable exceptions rather than the norm.

South Korean cinema reached its zenith of film production in 1970 when 231 films were produced; however, the figures plummeted shortly afterwards. As South Korean film critic Yi Hyo-In points out, the large number of films produced in 1970 contests the rigid distinction between the rosy 1960s and the dark 1970s (Yi Hyo-In 2004: 37). It also allows us to conjecture a certain level of continuity connecting the two. The genres that accounted for the majority of 1970s film productions were family melodramas, action films and youth films, which had their origins in the mainstream cinema of the 1960s (Lee Ho-Geol 2004: 89–91, 104–06). If the 1970s films were plagued by 'a handicraft production method, a control of nation-wide distributions by a modicum of theatre owners and local entrepreneurs, an inability and irregularities of production companies, an obsolete film language, a spawning of rough-and-ready quickies and imitations, an awkward directing and crude scenarios, and a dearth of imagination' (Jang Mi-Hee 2001: 185), those problems were not unique to the 1970s alone. Rather, they were inheritances from the previous decade.

These views lead us to conclude that by the time of the 1970s, South Korean cinema had to be fully aware of the general detrimental conditions that had surrounded its existence up to that moment. The conditions involved the matters pertaining to official censorship, backward cinematic technology, obsolete film language, an ineffective film industry and the lack of an international status of Korean national cinema. However, the military regime enacted the notorious Motion Picture Law in 1973 that regulated the numbers of production companies, domestic film production, foreign film importation, not to mention the content of the films themselves. As a result, it retarded cinematically critical minds of the day so that they could not produce anything particularly innovative or noteworthy. Nevertheless, precisely because of that specific political ambiance, the practical and theoretical activities to improve South Korean cinema took the form of the resistant youth culture and intellectual movement. Derived from this was a stream of domestic film movements channelled into awakening the national cinema to the artistic and realistic consciousness. Because of their intellectual orientation at the outset, the cinema movements subscribed extensively to new waves of international films in order to rearticulate them within the South Korean context. By so doing, they marked the genesis of the new wave consciousness in South Korean film history. Some noteworthy examples of such movements include the Visual Age Group (Yŏngsang Shidae, 1975–78), the Cultural Centre Generation (Munhwawŏn Saedae, 1970s) and the Small Film Festival (Chagŭn Yŏnghwaje, 1984), all of which exemplified the parricidal attempts of the new film generation to depart from the old conventions of domestic film culture and to place their national cinema within cutting-edge trends of world cinema.

The Visual Age Group

In his comprehensive study on the Visual Age Group, Korean film historian An Jae-Seok defines the subject as follows:

> The Visual Age Group is the name of a group of film-makers founded by the solidarity of a film critic, Byun In-Shik, and film directors including Kim Ho-Sun, Lee Jang-Ho, Ha Kil-Chong, Hong Pa, Lee Won-Se (who would later be replaced by Hong Ui-Bong). It also refers to the three-year period of a 'youth film movement' that started with the declaration of the Visual Age Manifesto on July 18, 1975 and ended with the summer issue of the quarterly journal *The Visual Age* (*Yŏngsang Shidae*) published on June 30, 1978.
>
> (An 2001a: 7)

Supposing that this three-year activity of the Visual Age Group constituted a 'film movement', comparisons and contrasts with other cases of cinema movement can further illustrate its characteristics. For instance, the French New Wave film-makers, such as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, disparaged French commercial cinema of the day as 'old-fashioned costume epics out of touch with modern life' (Neupert 2002: xxxiv). Such a critical voice materialized into the notion of 'auteur cinema' that endorses a film as the medium of the director's personal artistic vision. The

*Figure 1: The first issue of the journal "The Visual Age"w (*Yongsang Shidae, *Summer 1977). The back cover shows the poster of Milos Forman's* One Flew Over the Cuckoo's *Nest (1975).*

Visual Age Group followed the suit of the French New Wave particularly in its disapproval of established South Korean commercial cinema in the 1970s. The two issues of their journal *The Visual Age* also paralleled *Cahiers du Cinéma*, the house organ of the French New Wave group. However, the crucial difference is that whereas the French New Wave subscribed to concrete aesthetic frameworks such as 'La Caméra-Stylo' (The Camera-Pen) and the aesthetic value of *mise-en-scène* (Monaco 1976: 5–6), the Visual Age Group only put forward artistic rejuvenation of South Korean cinema as its catchphrase (Byun 1977: 11), but without presenting a concrete method based on any home-grown theory of film art.

The advocates of the New German Cinema, especially the 26 co-signers of the manifesto issued at the Oberhausen Short Film Festival in 1962, may provide another comparable model for the Visual Age Group. The Oberhausen Manifesto called attention to the collapse of West Germany's domestic film industry due to the unprincipled film subsidy and censorship by the government, and hailed the new wave of the young film-makers who were able to 'speak the international language of the cinema' (Elsaesser 1989: 18–21). Given that the Visual Age Group arose against the 1970s South Korean film industry that was also suffering from financial stagnation and state censorship, the Oberhausen group in its origin bears a strong similarity with the Visual Age Group. It is notable that the critiques by the Oberhausen group drew positive reactions from the government and resulted in the formation of Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film – a direct government funding of the film industry in 1967 (Elsaesser 1989: 22). In comparison to its German counterpart, the Visual Age Group barely elicited any practical repercussion from the official sector. One may ask whether the members of the Visual Age Group revolted against their version of the father's cinema as the New German Cinema accused its 'Papas Kino'. Most certainly, they lamented over the low-quality commercialism of South Korean cinema at the time, but the mainstream commercial cinema could not even claim the name of the father's cinema. To be precise, the Visual Age Group bemoaned the lack of any artistic tradition of South Korean cinema. To them, the old cinema had not even been born.

In its founding declaration in 1975, the Visual Age Group decried the current status of their national cinema and clarified their self-imposed mission:

> The new cinema of a new generation should be a gust of fresh wind that blows off the old skin, that is, a sharp-edged javelin aiming at pharisaic authoritarianism. Has a single case of cinema movement such as 'Nouvelle Vague' or 'New Cinema' ever risen in this country? [...] For this reason, here we six residents of the 'visual republic' will present a 'young perspective' through a convergence of our diverse cinematic individualities, and proclaim to be the protector of the silver screen by putting our hearts and heads together to seek new aesthetics and values of visual images.
>
> (An 2001a: 38)

The literary allusions like 'the old skin' and 'pharisaic authoritarianism' do not specifically address the concrete problems deeply rooted in the old

practices of the domestic cinema. However, Byun In-Shik, the only film critic among the six founding members of the Visual Age Group, had already addressed the particulars in a major criticism of South Korean cinema in his *The Rebellion of Film Aesthetics* (*Yŏnghwamiŭi Panran*) (1972), three years before the establishment of the group. Byun's reproach appears most vitriolic against South Korean cinema's customary plagiarism of Japanese originals. Tracing the origin of the plagiaristic history back to the 1920s when Korea's budding film industry was formed under Japanese imperialism, Byun argues that the following forty years (1930s–1960s) of Korean film history never got rid of the practice of copying, so much so that even contemporary youth films, the most successful genre during the 1960s to the early 1970s in South Korea, have merely presented characters who have 'immigrated from the Japanese reality' (Byun 1972: 265). Such a bastardization of the domestic cinema might have resulted from the sheer profit-seeking mentality prevailing in the film industry. Additionally, Byun claims that the lack of a resistant spirit on the part of the film-makers is also partially responsible for the consequence, since the South Korean film society has hardly protested against the governmental censorships as well as commercial imperatives (Byun 1972: 270–71). Byun's diagnosis is better understood in light of the politico-economic circumstances of the 1970s in which South Korean cinema was situated and out of which the Visual Age Group eventually emerged.

The government had tight control of the film industry as part of its agenda of media control. The fourth revision of the Motion Picture Law in 1973 reinstalled a licensing system for the registration of a film production company, which confined the number of companies to somewhere between 14 to 20 until the fifth revision of the Motion Picture Law in 1984, and gradually installed a monopoly structure in the film market (Park 2004: 166–67). The monopoly structure thwarted the new entry of potential companies, which, in a sense, hindered the film industry from adjusting itself to changing media environments (Jang Mi-Hee 2001: 182). Even the licensed companies were required to make 'national policy films' (*kukch'aek yŏnghwa*) and 'quality films' (*wusu yŏnghwa*): the first was a propaganda genre designed to proliferate ideas of anti-communism and industrialism, while the second was to espouse national ideologies and showcase traditional culture. The term 'quality' refers to content emphasizing traditional and nationalistic values that the government wanted to promote, and has less to do with cinematic creativity. The government provided funding for these productions and these films were distributed in the same way as other commercial films. On top of that, the double-censorship practice, which blue-pencilled original scenarios first and then also cut the resulting film, severely hampered film-makers' artistic creativity.

The film industry was passive and conforming. A licensed company contented itself with the 'foreign film import quota' granted in accordance with the number of national policy films and quality films that it produced in a year. However, domestic films could not compete with foreign films' marketability. For example, in 1978, a domestic film, *The Woman I Betrayed* (*Naega Bŏrin Yŏja*), ranked second at the year's box office, with 375,913 admissions. But the highest grossing film of the same year was *The Spy Who Loved Me* (USA), which drew 545,583 people, while

Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope (*USA*) attracted 347,258 South Korean movie-goers. Even *Doctor Zhivago* (USA) was re-released attracting admissions of 319,544 (Korean Film Institute 1978: 47, 61). These figures demonstrate that the South Korean film industry relied heavily on the foreign film (mostly Hollywood films) importation quota. Under such circumstances, the domestic mainstream film production degenerated into a huge reprocessing plant of generic clichés. It propagated melodrama and action films aimed to cater to the secular desires of the mass audience. Apart from these two major genres, film production companies also capitalized on 'literary films' (*munye yŏnghwa*), cinematic adaptations of established literary works. This seemingly artistic creation was also largely designed to meet the demands of the 'quality film system', which would lead to the acquisition of the foreign film import quota. Therefore, commercial in nature, even literary films were not different from other genre conventions. Statistics from the Korean Film Institute in 1978 sum up the overall situation: out of 117 domestic films produced in that year, 48 films were melodramas, 37 films were action films, 12 were national policy films (anti-communism propaganda), and there were 12 literary films (the categories are not mutually exclusive) (Korean Film Institute 1979: 104). The majority of the films were either government-sponsored or profit-driven.

To the Visual Age Group, the then-current state of South Korean cinema was marked only by the complicity between the institutional control of the government and the commercial interest of the film industry. The authoritarian air of the government filled both the political environment as well as the film industry as the coterie aimed their javelin against it. However, their resolution was idealistic: they believed that well-made artistic films would eventually overcome the plight South Korean cinema was going through by eventually winning both audiences and critical acceptance (An 2001a: 38). Ha Kil-Chong,[2] a founding member of the group, argued that the new cinema should not content itself with passive representation of socio-cultural phenomena, but must make an effort to lead the masses to more awareness of and active reflection on the established value system and moral standards, and to a more acute observation of social reality from a grass-roots point of view (Ha 1977: 28). Actually, this view was inspired by new cinema experiments from the western world to which Ha and his colleagues subscribed. The resounding presence of European art cinema, the French New Wave and the New American cinema enabled the Visual Age Group to envision a New Korean Cinema that would actually reflect Korean reality (An 2001a: 43–46). However, the most notable achievement in the process was the Visual Age Group's advocacy of film auteurism. Introducing new cinema movements from Europe and the United States, Ha (1977: 31) maintained,

> A common characteristic of these new cinemas is that the proponents of the new cinema spirit, on the one hand, agree that film-making is an artistic activity performed through a composite process, but on the other hand, they take film as an artistic link between the man and the medium, that is, an individual act of artistic creation.

2. Ha Kil-Chong (1941–79) remains a cultural icon born out of the 1970s South Korean cinema. His *The March of Fools* (*Babodŭleu Haengjin*, 1975) presented college students' youthful idealism and its ultimate defeat wrapped in an aura of social oppression. The film was an instant box-office success and the director himself emerged as an idol among college youths. In the late 1960s, Ha went to the United States to study film theory and production at the Graduate School of UCLA. However, Ha's first film after his coming back to South Korea, *A Treasure Pot* (*Hwabun*, 1972) got embroiled into a plagiarism dispute due to its similarities to Pier Paolo Passolini's *Teorama* (1971). In an interview with the author, South Korean film critic Chung Sung-Ill asserted that Ha's plagiarism of Passolini was obvious since it was highly likely that Ha had chances to see *Teorama* while he was in the United States. However, it is still possible to view the film as an extension of Ha's effort to implant the spirit of European art cinema into South Korean soil. His early death at the age of 38 buried the chances of his artistic talent coming to maturity and has only nurtured a legendary aura around his life and directorial career. Ha Kil-Chong's filmography is as follows: *The Pollen of Flowers* (*Hwabun*, 1972), *Fidelity* (*Sujŏl*,

1974), *The March of Fools* (*Babodŭleu Haengjin*, 1975), *I am Looking for a Wife* (*Yŏjarŭl Ch'atsŭmnida*, 1976), *The Ascension of Han-ne* (*Hannae eu Sŭngch'ŏn*, 1977), *Heavenly Homecoming of the Stars, Part II* (*Sok Byŏldŭleu Gohyang*, 1978), *Byŏng-Tae and Yŏng-Ja* (*Byŏngtae wa Yŏngja*, 1979).

He concludes the manuscript by noting that 'film is the mirror of reality, therefore, the film-maker is required to create a balanced spiritual system within a reality by projecting his own experience of the reality onto a visual language' (Ha 1977: 35). As such, realism and auteurism stood out as the kernel of the spirit of the Visual Age Group.

The six members made eleven films under the name of the Visual Age Group. Even though they employed a variety of themes and contents, each of the directors made self-conscious efforts to find new cinematic languages. For example, the director Hong Pa contributed three films, *Woods and Swamp* (*Supgua Nūp*, 1975), *When Will We Meet Again?* (*Ŏdisŏ muŏtyi doeŏ dashi mannari*, 1977), and *Fire* (*Bul*, 1978) to the filmography of the Visual Age Group. In the first two, Hong breaks the conventional sequencing of time in the film narrative by equally juxtaposing the past and the present within the same temporal dimension (An 2001a: 66–67). Film critic Kim Sa-Kyum stated that Hong's *When Will We Meet Again?* described the subjective conflicts between memory and oblivion, in an aesthetic style similar to Alain Resnais's works (An 2001a: 67). Lee Won-Se's *Flower and Snake* (*Kkotqua Baem*, 1975) and Ha Kil-Chong's *The Ascension of Han-ne* (*Hannae eu Sŭngchŏn*, 1977) presented a Korean folk tale on grudge and revenge, and the Buddhist idea of reincarnation respectively in their narratives. Adaptation of such indigenous subjects was part of the group's attempt to find 'Korean-style imagery' (An 2001a: 70). Thus, the films of the Visual Age Group focused on creating their own idiosyncratic filmic images so as to demonstrate that film-making was beyond a simple weaving of separate images into a narrative structure.

The Visual Age Group's film auteurism appeared like pioneerism, which they used to raise their national cinema to an artistic level on par with cinema movements in the West. The member directors promoted realism and auteurism as *the* condition for the new South Korean cinema. However, as briefly explained above, their films largely focused on creating stylistic auteurism at the expense of realism, focusing on indirect stories such as folk tales or Buddhism rather than reflecting what was currently taking place. Otherwise, considering their modernist themes of alienation and existentialism, it might be fair to say that they rendered subjective realism rather than social realism. Before joining the Visual Age Group, director Lee Jang-Ho made his impressive debut with *Heavenly Homecoming of Stars.* (1974) whose narrative concerned the tragic life of a barmaid and obviously based on social realism. Ha Kil-Chong also made *The March of Fools* (*Babodŭleu Haegjin*, 1975) in his pre-Visual Age Group period, and it proved a powerful social satire orchestrated by documentary-style realism. Both films marked the start of a movement hailed by college students in the 1970s as 'young cinema' (An 2001a: 25). Nevertheless, it was difficult for the directors to maintain cutting-edge social realism in face of the censorial bureau. For the Visual Age Group directors, stylistic auteurism provided a refuge where their artistic creativity and critical minds could thrive without limitation. In this sense, they became unfortunate solipsists as well as film auteurs and artistic pioneers.

The Visual Age Group echoed the common fate of other progressive intellectuals living in 1970s South Korea. Sociologist Kim Dong-Ch'un pointed out that the resistant block of intelligentsia-politicians, who set

social movements against the military government, barely tried to debunk nationalism, industrialism and the propaganda of Korean-style democracy, which had ideologically sustained the 'fascist regime' (Kim Dong-Ch'un 1994: 246–47). Their concern remained within the domain of methodology as to how to achieve those ideological goals by merely pointing out how the government was deviating from their methodological ideal. Likewise, the Visual Age Group only highlighted their ideal of film as a well-made art, while hardly challenging the underlying system that advanced its own version of the 'quality film'.

Even though the Visual Age Group did not realize all its ideals and visions, they were the first to consciously proclaim a cinema movement and attempt to bring a change in the status quo of the film industry of the time. Aside from their vision of directors as authorial artists creating and leading a new art-cinema movement to revive South Korean cinema, they also served to awaken a pioneering spirit resulting in populist reverberations in university students in the 1970s. The emergence of the Cultural Centre Generation also accounted for the situation.

The Cultural Centre Generation

The Cultural Centre Generation (Munhwawŏn Saedae) is a self-explanatory term: *munhwawŏn* refers to 'cultural centre' and *saedae* denotes 'generation'. The combination of a spatial concept and a temporal noun may sound clumsy, but its signification is precise and informative. The Cultural Centre Generation indicates an anonymous group of youngsters in the 1970s, mostly university students who found a particular usage of the French Cultural Centre (Centre Cultural Francais) and the German Goethe Institute as a route to reach scholarly, cultural works produced in Europe, which were otherwise unobtainable in the official domains of South Korean academia and popular culture. In cinema, the Cultural Centre Generation refers to those individuals who paid regular visits to the cinematheques of the two cultural centres in order to view French and German films screened under the aegis of those two countries.

The importance of the Cultural Centre Generation lies in that it historically bridged the critical minds of the Visual Age Group in the 1970s and its populist transformation in the Small Film Festival in 1984. The Cultural Centre youths hailed Ha Kil-Chong's *The March of Fools* (1975) and worshipped European modernist films just as the Visual Age Group did. Yet, the Cultural Centre Generation was not a deliberate organization of enlightened intellectuals so much as a spontaneous youth cultural phenomenon. Although it is impossible to provide full coverage of the individual names of those who claimed membership of the Cultural Centre Generation, it is evident that the collective experience of the cultural centre cinematheques nurtured a new generation of South Korean cinema. In this process, the Oberhausen Manifesto of the New German Cinema provided a spiritual impetus to some members of the Cultural Centre Generation, who would find their generational catchphrase in the Manifesto's final statement: 'The old cinema is dead.' Those who were galvanized by the Manifesto would wind up launching the Small Film Festival in 1984. Yet to understand the popular appeal that the foreign cultural centres exercised among the youths, it is necessary to know the political

ambience profoundly adverse to the growth of popular culture at the time. The following statements offer a snapshot of South Korean popular culture in the 1970s.

> The [Park Chung-Hee military regime's] governing power was so rigid that it could not tolerate even a hint of American-style liberalism, and wielded the power of censorship on the cultural activities of the youth. [...] Immediately after establishing 'The Committee on the Artistic and Cultural Morality' in 1975, the government forbade the publishing and broadcasting of 440 popular songs on the grounds that they did not suit the recently implemented 'Judging Principles and Directions for Popular Songs.' [...] The tide made a ripple effect onto the film society, so that many film-makers were forced to leave their work. Lee Jang-Ho, film director and a member of the Visual Age Group also got embroiled in the opium-smoking indictment.
>
> (An 2001b: 205)

Under these circumstances, foreign cultural centres, whether they were European or not, could provide semi-official avenues for foreign cultural works that escaped the Korean government's official censorship. These centres were established by their home governments for the purpose of introducing their culture to Koreans. The French Cultural Centre had operated its own cinematheque called Salle Renoir since its instalment in 1968 in Seoul (Chung Sung-Ill 2006). Salle Renoir provided a 'liberated district' where a full gamut of French cinema was screened (Chung Sung-Ill 2006): to name a few trends, they introduced surrealism of the 1920s, poetic realism of the 1930s, the French New Wave of the 1950s–1960s, and the post-New Wave of the 1970s.[3] As such, the whole history of French cinema was delivered to cultural-centre audiences.

Jean-Luc Malene, the incumbent president of the French Cultural Centre as of 2006, said,

> The French Cultural Centre provided an open window through which foreign cultures, and the current issues of Europe and other countries as well were delivered to South Korea, which was at the time under the oppression of military control. And, of course, the method was film. Introduced in the main were the French New Wave films such as those of Godard, Truffaut and even Buñuel who sought refuge in France from Spain for political reasons.
>
> (Yim Yin-Taek 2006, my translation)

Malene alluded that the French New Wave films provided a major repertoire that left an indelible mark in the memory of the Cultural Centre Generation. However, it is more likely that most of the French (and other European) films shown at the centre also impressed the young South Korean viewers. After all, there is no apparent reason to suppose that Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (*À bout de souffle*, 1960) appeared more fresh and innovative than, for instance, Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet* (*Le Sang d'un poète*, 1930) to the eyes of the audiences; the majority of the young would-be cinephiles had scant knowledge of the histories and trends of world cinema.

3. Chung Sung-Ill, personal interview with author, 3 August 2006.

As flocks of students visited the French Cultural Centre to watch French movies and expressed a growing interest in the historical and critical background of French cinema, the centre established the Cine Club in 1977. The Cine Club, where a group of trained film critics held the film screenings and seminars on a regular basis (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 19), might have transmitted the historical significance of the French New Wave to the South Korean watchers. The French films the cultural centre imported served to expand the horizon of the audiences' filmic experience and catered to their taste for European culture.

When the Goethe Institute in Seoul commenced the East-West Cinema Club in 1978, it seemed to follow the French example to reach out to Korean university students. The German cultural centre even created a study-abroad scholarship in order to attract the same audiences that flocked to the French Cultural Centre.[4] Thanks in part to such incentive policies, the East-West Cinema Club achieved immediate growth drawing around 300 South Korean members who would participate in a broad range of theoretical studies and translations as well as 8mm film-making (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 19). Despite its less-than-a-year life span (the club fell apart when interest died out and the majority of students stopped coming), the East-West Cinema Club gave birth to numbers of notable ramifications such as the three issues of *The East-West Cinema Bulletin* and the East-West Cinema Study Club, a film study group organized by the former student members of the East-West Cinema Club (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 19). This student group left its mark in the form of a quarterly journal called *Frame 1/24* (1980) and a short film entitled *Bridge* (*Dari*, 8mm, 1983) (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 19–20).

It is interesting to see how and why the East-West Cinema Club produced diverse accomplishments in comparison to the French Cultural Centre's Cine Club, which had first stood out as the locus of the Cultural Centre Generation cinephiles. No historical record written in Korean seems to have raised this question. Kim Soyoung (film director and critic), Chung Sung-Ill (film critic), and Kim Eui-Suk (film director), who all had joined the cinema club activities of the foreign cultural centres and became the main organizers of the Small Film Festival in 1984, commonly pointed out that they had found a spiritual connection in the Oberhausen Manifesto of the New German Cinema, and that the Manifesto inspired the idea of a new cinema in the young cinephiles.[5] The Oberhausen Manifesto must have had a certain appeal to the minds of the German cultural centre visitors, of which the French cinema lacked.

The films by Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, among others, impressed the Cultural Centre Generation in much the same way as the French films did. However, one crucial difference lies in the fact that the New German Cinema proclaimed a complete rupture 'against the mass-produced entertainment industry of the Nazi period and the 1950s, against the visual pleasure of lavish productions, and against the ideology of the economic miracle' (Hayward 2006: 181). French cinema had barely gone through any historical hardship as its cultural centre's repertoire displayed. Most importantly, the South Korean students made the connection between Nazi Germany and their own military government and between the collapse of the commercial German film industry

4. According to Chung Sung-Ill (3 August 2006), approximately 500 people participated in club activities hosted by the German cultural centre. The German cultural centre started around ten study clubs such as the Hegel study club, the Kafka study club, and so on. The idea of establishing the cinema study clubs was at once catalysed by the success of the French cultural centre cinematheque and encouraged by the expectation that films would attract the South Korean people more easily than the books written in Germany. The study-abroad scholarships offered to the club-activity participants were a powerful incentive, since the military government strictly regulated the moving in and out of the country. The liberalization of travel-abroad laws would be enacted as late as 1988 in South Korea.

5. The interviews with Chung Sung-Ill, Kim Soyoung and Kim Eui-Suk were conducted by the author during July and August in 2006.

and the degradation of the 1970s South Korean film industry.[6] Some passages of the Oberhausen Manifesto verify this assumption.

> The collapse of the commercial German film industry finally removes the economic basis for a mode of film-making whose attitude and practice we reject. [...] This new cinema needs new forms of freedom: from the conventions and habits of the established industry, from intervention by commercial partners, and finally freedom from the tutelage of other vested interests. [...] The old cinema is dead. We believe in the new.
>
> (cited in Elsaesser 1989: 21)

According to Chung Sung-Ill, the Oberhausen Manifesto enjoyed a wide circulation among the cinema club participants either in its original German or in the form of an English translation.[7] When the aforementioned interviewees stressed the emotional impact they received from the Oberhausen Manifesto, particularly from the final statement, 'The old cinema is dead,' they commonly recited this sentence with a slight variation, 'The father's cinema is dead' (*Abŏjiŭi yŏnghwaŭn chukŏtta*). This slip of the tongue might reflect their critical sense of the times when the patriarchal dictatorship was governing. Consequently, the Cultural Centre Generation and its reception of the Oberhausen Manifesto paved the way for the emergence of the notion of 'small film' in the early 1980s.

The Small Film Festival

The Small Film Festival under the motto of 'Let us protect small films!' was held at the National Theatre of Korea in Seoul on 7–8 July 1984. The term 'small film' technically referred to the 8mm or 16mm short films as opposed to the 'big' 35mm commercial film format, but rhetorically it signified an 'open cinema that reinterprets [social] reality in a critical perspective and presents future-oriented alternatives' (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 26). The promoters of the Small Film Festival rephrased the catchphrase as 'socially and cinematically resistant films (*sahoejŏk yŏnghwajŏk daehang yŏnghwa*)' (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 26), which connoted two important tenets sustaining the notion of small film: social consciousness of the film content and innovativeness of the film language. Considering the nationwide censorship by the military government, it was a bold move to organize the event with such an expressive purpose.

Forty-seven organizers, mostly university students and graduates, put their passion and heads together in order to launch this short-film festival without any financial support from the government or corporations. By way of roundtable discussions among the organizers, six final entries (out of 64) were chosen to be played in front of approximately 2,000 viewers.[8] At that time in South Korea, 8mm- and 16mm-format movies were a novel medium that only a small number of cinematic artists and film students could have access to because of their scarcity and high price. The festival organizers shared the belief that, in contrast to other theatrical and literary arts, the film medium had barely earned its due respect as an autonomous art form among academics and artists in the South Korean cultural atmosphere at that time. Therefore, they created a new catchphrase 'Small Film' and made the screening of the films in a large-scale

6. Chung Sung-Ill, personal interview with the author, 3 August 2006.

7. Ibid.

8. I have obtained the numerical information from the interviews that I conducted with Kim Eui-Suk, Yi Yong-Bae and Chung Sung-Ill on August 2006. The South Korean daily *Hankook Ilbo* issued a report on the Small Film Festival, and this report confirmed the number of the initial entries as 64 (*Hankook Ilbo* on 5 July 1984, cited in Seoul Cinema Collective 1995: 65).

event impressive enough to draw the interest of other artists: especially those liberals who opposed the military regime, including renowned left-wing painter and woodblock artist Pak Bul-Tong, who contributed a drawing to decorate the front page of the festival pamphlet. The Small Film Festival was an unprecedented cinematic event that affirmed the viability of non-commercial film-making and created a common bond among the young cine-artists.

Underneath the façade of festivity, the Small Film Festival filled itself with its own patricidal desire that reflected the Oberhausen Manifesto. Chung Sung-Ill, one of the co-hosts, remarked on the 'three fathers' that the idea of 'Small Film' had implicitly challenged – President Park Chung-Hee, South Korean commercial cinema and the film departments in universities.[9] In 1984, former president Park Chung-Hee had been assassinated five years previously, signalling the collapse of two decades of military dictatorship (1961–79). A new military junta led by Chun Doo-Hwan had arisen to crush the series of democratic movements unleashed by Park's death. Culminating in the Kwangju Uprising in May 1980 that cost thousands of civilian lives, the dramatic unfolding of domestic political events served to awaken the social consciousness of the Small Film generation. As a result, even though Park Chung-Hee had been dead for years, his legacy of military oppression kept his image of 'national father' alive in the minds of many youths. The student film-makers might have loathed the establishment of South Korean commercial cinema as much as the Visual Age Group had, but the institutional film education as the third object of their patricidal desire seems rather a stretch. Chung made it clear that in the eyes of the Small Film promoters, university film departments had only churned out quasi-avant-garde, gibberish films, too solipsistic to relate to any social realities of the day.

That the three-father mentality was actually functioning was proven by the fact that the 47 organizers were mostly the affiliates of the Cultural Centre Generation who detested the existing commercial cinema in South Korea and governmental restrictions on freedom of expression. The organizers of the Small Film Festival were also under the cultural umbrella of the Visual Age Group that had left significant critiques on South Korean cinema. Notably, quite a few were film majors at regular universities with short-film awards won in the Korean Youth Film Festival (held annually since 1975). Others were graduates attending the Korean Academy of Film Arts, the government-sponsored institution established in 1984. There were also some members of student film-making organizations such as the Seoul Cinema Collective (Sŏwul Yŏnghwa Chipttan, est. 1982) and the Cinema Field 'Uri' (Yŏnghwa Madang 'Uri', est. 1984). What brought all these students from different backgrounds together was the *minjung* discourse, an emphasis on the lives of the people.

Apart from the fact that the festival promoters were university students and recent graduates, it is worth noting that the newly inaugurated Chun Doo-Hwan administration enacted the Measure for School Autonomy (hagwŏn jayulhwa joch'i) on 21 December 1983 (Kang Jun-Man 2003b: 171), only six months before the Small Film Festival. This ruling strategy was designed to appease the student activism most likely to erupt against the new military junta. One of the most palpable changes was the withdrawal

9. Chung Sung-Ill, personal interview with the author, 3 August 2006.

10. ibid.

of the police forces that had been permanently stationed on school campuses. Thanks in part to this, the students' intramural activities were invigorated and the Small Film Festival seemed to come out as one of the consequences.

However, on a deeper level, attention must be paid to the fact that between 1979 and 1984 the youth culture, which had predominantly germinated across universities, underwent a radical transformation. Despite its diverse ramifications such as the Cultural Centre Generation, the youth culture rooted in schools had also maintained an enduring tradition of social activism. Having started with the Russian-influenced *vnarod* (going to the people) type of activities in the 1960s in which the students went out to the countries to educate the rural population, the social commitment of the youth gradually developed into a political movement against the military junta in the 1970s. In the process, the students rediscovered and recognized the lowest social strata, which included not only farmers but also factory workers and even ghetto dwellers, as the ultimate force to initiate a social reformation. Such collective social entities came to go by the folkloric label of *minjung*. Most congruent with the working class in Marxism, the notion of *minjung* envisaged a communal democracy that the student activism espoused and more importantly inspired artistic representations via theatre (*minjung yŏnhee*), painting (*minjung misul*), literature (*minjung munhak*), etc. The common principle that the *minjung*-oriented arts observed was the *minjung* realism that resonated with Georg Lukács's socialist realism. During the years between 1979 and 1984 this cultural episteme that one may call the *minjung* discourse emerged dominant among the school youth, replacing the preceding liberalist tendencies.

On the demise of former dictator Park Chung-Hee in October 1979, spontaneous democratization drives ignited universities across the country under the banner of the 'University Democratization Movement' (Hakwŏn minjuhwa wundong). Relaying this stream, the early 1980s student movement culminated in the 'Spring of Seoul', the figure of speech that signified the short interregnum before Chun Doo-Hwan mounted a new military *coup d'état* (Kang Jun-Man 2003a: 103). About 100,000 students gathered around Seoul Station on 15 May 1980 to call for the revocation of martial law and a democratic reform (Kang Jun-Man 2003a: 103). Chung Sung-Ill reminisced and said that 'the infinite number of participants made the event an earthshaking incident because such a large-scale multitude had been unimaginable by the end of the 1970s'.[10] Indeed, such an unprecedented mass mobilization must have offered a source of self-confidence for the Small Film promoters to push for their own innovative event.

In addition to the external circumstances, the overall contents of the films submitted to the festival testified to their identification with the *minjung* discourse. The contents contained (1) an inexorable exhibition of lower class life; (2) a description of the youth as an alienated entity just as much as the *minjung* was; (3) a criticism of the modern society based on its anti-populace nature. The six final entries submitted to the festival were *South of the River* (*Kangŭi Namtchok*, Jang Gil-Su), *Doors* (*Mun*, Suh Myung-Su), *Pannori Arirang* (Seoul Cinema Collective), *The Eve* (*Jŏnyajae*,

Hwang Gyu-Duk), *Shelter City* (*Ch'ŏnmak Doshi*, Kim Eui-Suk) and *Tears of a Monk* (*Sŭngŭi Nunmul*, Choi Sa-Kyu).

South of the River (16mm, b/w, 14 min.) depicts a vagabond couple: the husband makes a living as a temporary construction worker while the wife operates a makeshift chophouse built near the construction site. As the film title *South of the River* indicates, the spatial backdrop identifies the area called Kangnam that lies south of the Han River in Seoul, where since the 1970s skyscrapers have arisen to make the place the locus of South Korean rapid industrialization and it has flourished economically as a result. In the middle of the narrative there is a montage sequence that cross-cuts the shots in which the wife serves wine to construction workers and the husband becomes infuriated about her presumably loose behaviour. From this basic conflict the film extracts three climactic moments: in the opening sequence the husband with a kitchen knife in his hand chases after the wife who tries to run away from him; the two dramatically reconcile at the moment of the man's knife swinging; but the ending repeats the situation of the first scene implying that the couple's embattled life has to continue. The on-location shots captured on the black-and-white film obviously echo Italian neo-realist films. However, the thematic point lies in the sense of alienation that is present not only between the two main characters but also between the buildings of Kangnam and the people who actually built the place, but would never be able to share the capitalistic richness that the Kangnam area represents. According to director Jang Gil-Su, who trained as a disciple of the Visual Age Group, *South of the River* tapped into the audiences' consciousness on the harmful effect of developmentalism and the problem of the urban poor (Jang Gil-Su 2001: 21). The film was initially screened at Yonsei University in 1980 and enjoyed a wide circulation across student film festivals that included the Small Film Festival (Jang Gil-Su 2001: 21).

Pannori Arirang (8mm, colour, 18 min.) is a documentary that records a performance of a courtyard play entitled *Pannori Arirang*. The film betrays the film-makers' self-consciousness about the technique and theme of their work. With no off-screen commentary, the narrative weaves through intermittent voices of interviews with the actors and with the audiences. The screen alternates between the still shots and moving pictures taken in the make-up room, from the rehearsal and from the actual performance. But the visual and the aural contents do not match but rather constitute two separate discourses. Kim Yong-Tae, one of the organizers of the Small Film Festival, appraised the audio-visual discord as being orchestrated to generate an 'estrangement effect' that 'induces the viewer's mental participation into the film' (Kim Yong-Tae 2001: 48–49). The central question the film poses is who should be the main audience of the courtyard play that mainly deals with the life of *minjung*. A voice-over sardonically remarks, 'Eggheads would be the main audience.' The ensuing commentary made by the interviewer continues, 'Then, all your performances that aim to represent the *minjung* would be a mere masturbation' since nobody on and under the stage could claim the status of *minjung*. Consequently, the estrangement effect of *Pannori Arirang* attempts to objectify the *minjung* discourse by addressing the ontological gap between *minjung* and the upper middle class that consist of students and intellectuals.

Pannori Arirang was a group project made by the Seoul Cinema Collective founded in 1982. The main body of its members was from the Yalashyŏng Film Study Group that had started as a student film-making club in Seoul National University in 1979. Out of six films that the Yalashyŏng Group made during 1980–83 and left synopses, three were about coming-of-age issues that university students of the day confronted; another two presented pickpockets to delineate the dark side of society; and the last one had a rather abstract subject – free will and human liberation. This filmography reveals that the student films began to construct a thematic framework in which the student characters are ontologically identified with the *minjung*: both entities mostly appear to be existential heroes who wander at the edge of mainstream society (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 181–83).

The Eve (8mm, 30 min.) presents a student character who has to live through aimless ennui before being drafted into mandatory military service. If the conscription were to imply the military system, the protagonist's spiritual wandering could allegorize the collective sentiment of the youth at the time. *Shelter City* (16mm, colour, 30 min.) falls into the same category of an existentialist theme. Two young men leave home in search of an 'island', the symbol of their utopia. However, those 'alienated and deserted' people cannot share their feeling with each other and fail to develop a human bond between them, and the image of 'an insect confined in a glass' makes an allusion to the existential condition of the characters (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 189). *Tears of a Monk* (16mm, b/w, 15 min.) delineates 'religious ardour and Buddhistic emancipation toward redemption'. Although addressing a religious theme, this film makes an existentialist cinema *par excellence* as it tackles in earnest the individual's spiritual journey (Seoul Visual Collective 1995: 189). These three films seem to stand apart from the *minjung* realism, that is, what *South of the River* represents. Instead, they place the youth characters in the common existential dilemma that originates from the conflict between the individual and society. However, the existentialist theme might have been the only mode of expression allowed for the young film-makers who otherwise could not enunciate the social oppression of the day.

Lastly, *Doors* (16mm, b/w, 12 min. 30 sec.) appears as a social commentary that pronounces the inhumane anonymity of urban life. A schoolboy is desperately looking for a rest room, stepping in and out of buildings he encounters on his way home. But every bathroom the boy is lucky to find is locked, and his attempts of urination on the roadside are spotted and stopped by adult passers-by. Inserted into the boy's odyssey are the pictures of shop windows that display garish ornaments. The message is clear that despite its ostensible abundance, capitalism is unable to meet even the most fundamental of human needs. The circumstances in which the boy is situated reverberates with the film's existentialist theme. Meanwhile, the film also reflects some elements of *minjung* discourse in certain montage shots that contain the pictures of the countryside. Yi Chong-Hak (2001: 46) interprets the montage scene as an 'antithesis' to the urban life. The antithesis may implicate the healthiness of labour and collectivism and utilizes *minjung* discourse in its own way.

In conclusion, the Small Film Festival entries commonly deal with the individuals who struggle to find the meaning of their existence in the world that stands only at the expense of human dignity. In this general set of themes, the *minjung* appears as the victim of inhumane developmentalism (*South of the River*), as the existential counterpart of the youths who cannot find the route to speak for themselves (*Pannori Arirang*, *The Eve* and *Shelter City*), and as the bearer of the counter-discourse against capitalism (*Doors*).

Kim Soyoung, who physically presided over the two-day event of the Small Film Festival, asserted that as long as the underlying keynote of the Small Film Festival had been 'The father's cinema is dead,' then, it had had hardly anything to do with the Visual Age Group or any other preceding cinema movements in South Korea.[11] However, considering that the Small Film promoters were also the products of the 1970s cultural milieu, Kim's somewhat rigid discrimination seems to point to an ideological gap between the liberalist tendency of the Visual Age Group and the Cultural Centre Generation, and the populist tendency of the Small Film Festival.

One may describe this historical progression as a process of hegemonic transformation. On the premise that hegemony works by eliciting unanimous consent from subordinate subjects, Antonio Gramsci (1978: 60–61) asserts that for a hegemonic transformation, the leadership has to be in charge of the intellectual and moral reformation. By analogy, the Visual Age Group was able to wield intellectual leadership by importing western cinema movements and to have a level of moral leadership by criticizing the established cinematic conventions. The Cultural Centre Generation remained as the major army that supported the hegemony of the Visual Age Group. By the time the Small Film Festival appeared, the intellectuals' organization could no longer secure its moral leadership in the face of newly emerging mass politics. Yet at the same time, aside from the budding *minjung* discourse, new intellectual leadership had not arrived yet to substantiate the Small Film generation. The parricidal impulse and the existential anxiety testified to the absence of the intellectual centre. But soon Latin American 'people's cinema' would provide a mentorship for the new film generation who would initiate the South Korean Independent Cinema Movement in the course of the 1980s.

11. Kim Soyoung personal interview with the author, 7 July 2006.

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The avant-garde and resident Korean film-making: Kim Sujin and the Shinjuku Ryozanpaku

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Abstract

The plays and films of Kim Sujin (1954–) and his company Shinjuku Ryozanpaku attest to the variety of styles employed in recent works by resident Korean artists in Japanese literature and theatre. The appearance of his plays and films is connected to the changing identities of resident Koreans, especially since the 1980s. Kim makes use of political theatre performances of the earlier period to magnify and to remake into art the experiences of resident Koreans in Japan. As such, his works mobilize the legacy of his antecedents in Japanese theatre as well as the past experiences of resident Koreans. Instead of enacting an essential Korean ethnicity or culture onstage or through films, Kim inclines toward denoting migration, hybridity and being situated as betwixt and between. By doing so, his works depict the distinct niche occupied by resident Koreans in Japan, which distinguishes them from both the Koreans on the mainland and the Japanese.

Keywords

Koreans in Japan
Japanese cinema
Japanese theatre
Kim Sujin
Shinjuku Ryozanpaku

Numerous styles of film are employed by resident Korean (*zainichi kankokujin*/*chōsenjin*) film-makers in contemporary Japan. Kim Sujin (1954–) and Chong Wi Shin (1957–), for example, use both realistic and non-realistic styles, and their films are thus quite innovative and groundbreaking.[1] Both Kim and Chong began their careers in theatres and were largely influenced by the Japanese and non-Japanese counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s. Especially significant to them were antecedents such as Kara Juro, Satoh Makoto and Terayama Shūji, who, as David Desser (1988: 173) argues, rejected 'realism as a theatrical mode, and the ideology which underlies it'. As such, their works have an affinity with avant-garde theatre, which is understood by Peter Eckersall (2006: xiv) as an 'attack on the status of art as autonomous in the bourgeois society'. The avant-garde theatre, according to Eckersall, also has the following general characteristics:

- An interest in everydayness and making the world into art
- Corporeality and a concern with the body and flesh
- The use of materials and forms essential to artistic practice; it reveals or displays those forms as art
- A privileging of experience and communal acts of participation
- It is systematic and manifesto-like, but also spontaneous (Eckersall 2006: xiv–xv)

1. I have, as is customary, put Korean and Japanese family names first in this article.

Kim Sujin and his theatre company, Shinjuku Ryozanpaku, also carry the self-proclaimed mission of 'reviving the story/the romantic' (*monogatari/roman no fukken*), and their works carry a strong sense of romanticism and pathos.[2] This is also why Chong Wi Shin, Kim's one-time collaborator, is able to write avant-garde and more realistic screenplays. Kara, Satoh, Kim, and Chong also share an outlook that views critically Japan's pre-war colonialism and post-war racial discrimination. Kim's works are not meant to legitimize the two Koreas, nor are they a mere extension of political activism carried out by resident Koreans. His works, while frequently ambiguous, are in part oriented toward discovering and making claim to the innocence, beauty and vulnerability as well as the complex identity formation and history of the resident Koreans. In this, these plays and films become, using Lisa Yoneyama's words on other memory formations in post-war Japan, 'a site where contestatory representations of Japan's colonial history could be enunciated, thereby providing [...] the possibility of forging new alliances, questions, and visions that might exceed the boundaries of ethnicity and nationality' (Yoneyama 1999: 154). Kim and Chong make use of political theatre performances of the earlier period as a means through which to magnify and to remake into films the resident Korean experiences in Japan. As such, they reject a conflation of resident Koreans with the Koreans in Korea or with the Japanese as well as a totalizing national identity. As I will discuss in my article, the discarding of a singular national identity and seeing themselves as hybrids of different national cultures has been especially marked in the resident Korean culture of the 1980s and since. Resident Koreans' works in theatre and films was a harbinger of this new identity formation by resident Koreans during the last few decades. The characters we encounter in their works make manifest the historical trauma and memory not of Koreans in general, but of resident Koreans in Japan. Resident Koreans were victimized by Japanese colonialism during the pre-war years and then through the discrimination that persisted after World War II, and their works are a testimony to those experiences. These two resident Korean artists, moreover, emphasize the aesthetic experiences that are connected to everyday life. In order to carry this out, they mobilize the legacy of their antecedents in Japanese theatre as well as the experiences of past generations of Koreans in Japan.

Shinjuku Ryozanpaku

Shinjuku Ryozanpaku, a theatre company in Tokyo, made the news in the summer of 2007 when it was sued by its former playwright, Chong Wi Shin, when the group tried to perform *The Summer Since* (*Sorekara no natsu*), a play written by Chong in 1992. Ryozanpaku had to cancel the play but hit back when it in turn sued Chong, claiming that although Chong is named as the author of the company's plays, the plays were in fact collaboratively created by all the members of Ryozanpaku. This schism is unfortunate, for Chong has had a long-lasting and profound relationship with the avant-garde theatrical troupe. Kim Sujin, born and raised in Tokyo, founded Ryozanpaku together with Chong in 1986. Shinjuku Ryozanpaku takes its name from 'Shinjuku', an area in downtown Tokyo, and 'Ryozanpaku', meaning 'Robber's Den', from the Chinese classic

2. See the Ryozanpaku website, http://www5a.biglobe.ne.jp/~s-ryo/ (accessed 19 December 2007). This aspect of Ryozanpaku was also emphasized by actress and staff member Watarai Kumiko in my interview with her on 31 August 2007.

The Marshes of Mount Liang (aka *Water Margin*, *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shuǐhǔ Zhuàn*)). Shinjuku Ryozanpaku is not widely known in Japan, but it is one of the major *angura* (underground theatre) companies currently active in the theatre world there. Being a small *angura* company, it has no administrative staff; rather, its actors run the company from their small office above their studio Sky Full of Stars, the Theatre Fortress (Shibai Toride Mantenboshi), in central Tokyo.

Both Kim and Chong have also been active recently in film-making. Chong has, together with Sai Yōichi (Choi Yang Il), written three original screenplays and adapted two novels and one manga into screenplays, with Sai directing them all. Most famous among them are the resident Korean features *All under the Moon* (*Tsuki wa dotchi ni deteiru*, Sai Yōichi, 1993) and *Blood and Bones* (*Chi to hone*, Sai Yōichi, 2004). Chong has also adapted novels and manga into screenplays for other directors, the most highly praised in this regard being the film *Begging for Love* (*Ai o kou hito*, Hirayama Hideyoshi, 1998). Kim in turn directed his first feature film, *Through the Night* (*Yoru o kakete*, 2002), which was followed by *Dreaming of Light* (*Garasu no tsukai*, 2006). Since 1987, he has also been an active director and leader of the Shinjuku Ryozanpaku. While the two are no longer working together, they are actively engaged in both film-making and theatre production and are prolific in both regards.

The two are not the only resident Koreans who have been active in Japanese theatres. Tsuka Kōhei (1948–) has been a major playwright and director in Japan since the late 1970s. His comedies, which were commercially successful, are regarded by critic Senda Akihiko as representative of the successful Japanese theatre scene of the late 1970s and later (Senda Akihiko 1995: 160–75). Major resident Korean author Yu Miri (1968–) also began her writing career in theatre. Under the tutelage of her mentor, and boyfriend at the time, Higashi Yutaka, and his theatre company the Tokyo Kid Brothers, she wrote several successful plays. After leaving that company, she ran her own theatre company, the May-Youth Party (Seishun gogatsu tō), for several years.[3] Several plays and novels by Tsuka and Yu have been adapted as films, some critically acclaimed.[4]

Kim Sujin started his career in theatre with a short stint with Ninagawa Yukio and then spent eight years at Kara Juro's Situation Theatre (Jōkyo Gekijō). In 1986, he began his own company, the Madang Theatre Project (Engeki kikaku madang), with Chong Wi Shin, which evolved a year later into Shinjuku Ryozanpaku.[5] Kim has been a stage director for the company throughout, and has also acted at times, playing both small and large roles onstage. Chong, born in Osaka, was raised there by his parents, who were in the iron-scrapping business. He graduated from the Tokyo Film School (Tokyo eiga gakkō), headed by the late film director Imamura Shōhei. He started his career in theatre, however, and was initially a member of the Black Tent (Kuro tento) company, led by Satoh Makoto. Both the Situation Theatre and the Black Tent are known in Japanese theatre history as early *angura* companies, producing an independent, low-budget, radical form of theatre. Kara and Satoh, two major playwrights and theatre directors who became successful in the 1960s, are still very active.[6] Satoh's major play, *My Beatles* (*Atashi no beatles*), makes use of the Komatsugawa Incident of 1958, in which a young resident Korean

3. Kim directed Yu's company in the production of her play *Coffin of Sun Flowers* (*Himawari no hitsugi*) in 1991.

4. There are ten film adaptations of Tsuka's works, the most notable being *Fall Guy* (*Kamata kōshinkyoku*, dir. Fukasaku Kinji, 1982), and three film adaptations of Yu's works, one being a South Korean film, *Family Cinema* (*Kazoku cinema*, dir. Park Chul-Soo, 1998).

5. '*Madang*' means 'public square' in Korean.

6. On Kara's works in general and his fictional work *Letters from Sagawa* (*Sagawa-kun kara no tegami*) in particular, see Mark Morris (2007).

high-school student, Li Jin Wu, killed a Japanese female student. The play is a fantastic tale in which a character based on Li meets and holds conversations with the four members of the Beatles.[7] Both the Situation Theatre and the Black Tent actively assigned main roles to resident Korean actors. Situation Theatre's heroine was always played by Lee Reisen, who was Kara's wife at the time, and the late actress Kim Kum-ja was a member of the Black Tent before she transferred to the Ryozanpaku with Chong.[8] As Peter Eckersall (2006: 38) writes, 'relating to the avant-garde formation of *angura* (in the late 1960s) was the fact that it arose as an important site of cultural displacement and political activism'.

Chong wrote seven plays for the Ryozanpaku, and he often appeared onstage in minor roles. Kim directed all of those plays. Possibly reflecting Kim's Korean background, the Ryozanpaku also worked closely with South Korean theatre companies such as Koripe, which is led by its director and playwright, Lee Yun-Taek. Chong, on his own, resumed writing plays in 1999 and also started directing them. Since then, as of 2007 he has written seven plays and directed them all. Ryozanpaku, since Chong's departure, has been staging plays by other writers, in particular relying on works by Kim's mentor, Kara Juro. The controversy of authorship notwithstanding, Kim and Chong, together and separately, have created an amazing array of works on-screen and in theatres. Their works are at times hauntingly beautiful and daring, attesting to their originality and creativity. Their works are especially significant in that they carry marks of mobility, deterritoriality and identity that reflect their authors' standing as resident Koreans creating art in Japan. This essay will address some issues in these authors' plays and connect them to themes in Kim Sujin's films.

1. One Thousand Years of Solitude

Kim and Chong's two major works of collaboration are *One Thousand Years of Solitude* (*Sen-nen no kodoku*) and *Legend of Mermaids* (*Ningyo densetsu*). Written by Chong and first directed onstage by Kim in 1988 and 1990, respectively, these plays have been produced by Ryozanpaku several times over the past decades. The company has performed the two plays not only in Japan but also overseas in cities such as Shanghai, Seoul and Essen in Germany, and they received rave reviews in Shanghai.[9] It is unfortunate that the ongoing dispute between Shinjuku Ryozanpaku and Chong is preventing the company and Chong from performing these works again onstage.

I will here discuss some aspects of the play *One Thousand Years of Solitude* (hereafter called *Solitude*) that situate the work within the postcolonial diaspora. While its dialogue is altogether quite coherent, it includes many dreamlike scenes in which it is not always clear how the characters who appear onstage relate to each other. Nevertheless, the characters are clearly drawn, and the audience can easily grasp and sympathize with their circumstances.

The performance available on VHS videocassette is largely faithful to Chong's published play. The play, as well as Kim's staging of it, emphasizes the main characters as migrants and travellers, as people whose origins lie elsewhere. In this, it is similar to *Legend of Mermaids,* a story about a resident Korean family (Chong Wi Shin 1990). The heroine of *Solitude* is a young woman named Ageha (swallowtail butterfly), and the play

7. The full English translation of this play is in David G. Goodman (2003: 193–223). For Goodman's discussion of the Komatsugawa Incident as the basis of this play, see Goodman (2003: 180–87).

8. Lee Reisen recalls her life as a resident Korean, her marriage to Kara Juro, and her acting career in her memoirs (Reisen 1999). See also Tsuruki Jun's biography (2000) of Lee.

9. For Chinese reviews of their Shanghai performances, see Seto Hiroshi (1993). Lee Yun-Taek says that among the Japanese plays he saw in South Korea, Ōta Shōgo's play and *Legend of Mermaids* were the best (Nishidoh Kōjin 2005: 161).

includes her ex- and current boyfriends, Kakeru and Hikaru. In an early scene we see Kakeru selling his ownership of Ageha to Hikaru, an exchange that situates Ageha as their lover as well as their possession. Ageha stays in the compound of her house, where her only passion is to clean a glass case that holds her namesake, a swallowtail. In that sense, 'swallowtail' in the play is both a captivator and a captive. Ageha has a deranged mother who constantly cries '*Mansei*!' (*banzai* in Korean), thereby situating the heroine as a resident Korean. In the play, frequent references are made to the place 'across the river' (*kawa mukō*); an implication is that the place is actually Korea and the 'river' refers to a strait between Japan and Korea. Kakeru tells Hikaru that he himself paid money to bring Ageha from 'across the river'. Ageha's journey across borders is emphasized not only through dialogue but also in the form of scroll lantern pictures of a butterfly crossing the sea and the land, shown twice during the play.

Despite her deprived circumstances, Ageha is nevertheless reluctant to return 'across the river'. She says that despite her present unhappiness, she will stay put, willing to wait forever for someone who will love her and polish her glass case with her; hence the title *One Thousand Years of Solitude*. With this person, she dreams of making herself a home and being greeted with the words 'Welcome home' (*okaerinasai*). Indeed, it is with that phrase that the play ends, although the words are not addressed to Ageha. As such, there is a strong emphasis in the play on passage and resettlement. Ageha's owners/lovers, Kakeru and Hikaru, are themselves strangers in this town, and they constantly talk about leaving and going somewhere else.

Also frequently appearing in the play are the characters of an old woman, an older sister and a younger brother. They are constantly scared of a tiger (another Korean reference) and of being victimized by that animal. This sister is possibly a younger Ageha, in that she has high hopes and dreams of going across the river. This young girl from the past is not the only double of Ageha, as there are four other women who appear together in the shadow of a stage and whose names are all Ageha. Sometimes in chorus and sometimes separately, the four exchange words with the heroine, creating the effect of a split, fragmented identity. The heroine, although a captive herself, is the one who desires to keep her butterfly in a glass case. Instead of breaking the case and letting the butterfly out, her sole interest is in keeping it there and polishing the case. It is up to Hikaru, who is not from 'across the river' and is therefore possibly Japanese, to express a Chekhovian hope, to try to let the butterfly fly away and have the heroine move on.

> Hikaru: 'The world is supposed to shine a lot brighter than does the glass case. As long as we keep crossing that river, we don't have to hold sacred some fragile thing. We don't need a glass case, and we don't need a suitcase. Whatever it may be, we must not deprive it of freedom.'
>
> (Chong Wi Shin 1989: 171)

Another important aspect of *One Thousand Years of Solitude* is its obvious connection with Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.[10] Similar to this novel, the play has a strong aspect of magical realism. And

10. The cover of Chong's book published in Japan bears the title in English as 'A Thousand Years' Lonesomeness', but the Japanese title *Sen-nen no kodoku* obviously references the Japanese translation of the Márquez novel, *Hyaku-nen no kodoku*.

as with magical realism in South American literature, what is recognized here is 'the workings of the unconscious, interventions of the inner mind on the perceptions of the external conscious, the external world' (Strecher 2002: 80). In representing the fantastic and in referencing the Márquez novel, Chong was considerably influenced by Terayama Shūji, another major avant-garde playwright of the 1960s and 1970s. Chong's Kishida Drama Prize-winning work was none other than the play titled *The Terayama* (*Za terayama*), which Chong describes as a collaborative work between himself, Satoh Makoto and Terayama (Chong Wi Shin 1994: 120).[11] The play, while mimicking Terayama's various motifs and styles, focuses on three men and two women, all of whom plan and dream about one day going to 'the other side' (*mukō*). 'The other side' is deliberately left ambiguous, the place possibly being either Japan or Korea. Chong's *Legend of Mermaids* also focuses on a family of Koreans who migrate to Japan. Kim's directing further emphasized the arrival and departure motifs by opening that play with the protagonists arriving in Japan (and onstage) in a boat.[12]

Kara Juro was another instigator of the radical performances of Ryozanpaku. In 1993, Ryozanpaku for the first time performed Kara's play *Call from the City of Young Women* (*Shōjo toshi kara no yobigoe*), which had originally been written and performed in 1985.[13] Ryozanpaku has repeatedly performed that play since, in Canada in 1996 and in New York in 1999. Since 2003, they have also repeatedly performed Kara's *Matasaburo of the Wind, Kara Version* (*Kara ban kaze no matasaburō*), a work that was originally written by Kara in 1974 and performed by his Situation Theatre in that year. Kara's dreamlike plays as well as his methods of production have had a huge impact on Ryozanpaku. Situation Theatre's *angura* style was quite radical in that they performed their plays in their red tent at unconventional venues such as the Hanazono Shrine in Tokyo, a style that has been replicated by Ryozanpaku.[14] While Ryozanpaku has a permanent headquarters in Tokyo, the company has also frequently put up their 'purple tent' (*murasaki tento*) à la Situation Theatre's 'red tent' (*aka tento*) for their performances. Satoh Makoto's company similarly toured all over Japan as the Black Tent theatre company.[15] The Ryozanpaku members, as did the company members of Kara and Satoh, usually put up their own stage, take it down after performances and transport their equipment on a truck to other cities. The Situation Theatre was also radical among *angura* companies in that it performed unconventionally in countries such as South Korea, which in the 1970s was still under military dictatorship, and Bangladesh as well as in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria, countries to which earlier Japanese theatre companies had rarely travelled.[16] Their 1972 performance in Seoul was unauthorized, and it was carried out at the invitation of Kim Ji-ha, who opposed the military regime (Nishidoh Kōjin 2005: 19). Such overseas productions, and Kara's and Satoh's critiques on modern Japanese history and national identities in their plays, are possibly what inspired resident Koreans such as Kim and Chong to work for them at the beginning of their careers. With this being the case, Mark Morris (2007: 19) is correct in ascertaining that 'Kara's most significant cultural legacy'

11. Satoh Makoto asked Chong to write the play to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Terayama's death in 1983. Satoh himself directed the play in 1993 (Chong Wi Shin 1994: 118, 130). Terayama's final film, *Farewell to the Ark* (*Saraba hakobune*, dir. Terayama Shūji, 1984) was based on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, but García Márquez, after viewing the film, refused to give Terayama permission to use the title of his book (Steve Clarke 2003: 123–24).

12. This opening scene, which was shown in their performances in Shanghai, China, and also in Han-gan, South Korea, was particularly noted and praised by several critics. See Seto Hiroshi (1993: 3, 17–18, 27) and Lee Yun-Taek (2007).

13. The play was a revised version of Kara's earlier work, *Shōjo toshi* (*City of Young Women*, aka *Virgin City*), written and first performed in 1969 (Senda Akihiko 2007: 234).

14. On Kara's tent theatres, see Eckersall (2006: 63).

15. Satoh Makoto (1979: 140–43) writes about his travelling experiences with his Black Tent company during the 1970s in his collection of essays, *Engeki ronshū gankyū shaburi* (*Licking the Eyeballs: Collected Essays on Theatre*). There, Satoh discusses the significance of the *sasurau* (wandering)

exists in 'a space of cultural activity between national identities that the radical *angura* theatre [...] [has] explored since the 1960s'. I will comment now on various aspects of Kim's two films and how they are connected to plays written by Chong and by Kara.

2. Films by Kim Sujin

Kim's first and second films, *Through the Night* and *Dreaming of Light*, were both produced in the main by Arton, a publishing firm in Tokyo owned by a resident Korean, Kaku Chang Yang. Kim and Kaku chose to audition the actors for the first film, and they required the applicants to submit an essay explaining their motivation. This proved an interesting experience for many resident Koreans and Japanese youngsters, as they recalled in interviews with journalist Fujii Seiji (2002).[17] It became an opportunity for them to reflect on what it means to be a resident Korean in modern Japan.[18] For the successful applicants, the making of the film proved to be even more of a learning process, as they had to play a large role in the film's production. Prior to shooting the film, they all stayed at a motel in the city of Gunsan, South Korea, to build a film set that replicated a Korean ghetto of 1950s Osaka. As the documentary on the making of the film attests, the Ryozanpaku staff/actors, such as Kobiyama Yōichi, played a huge role in the production of this film.[19]

Through the Night is largely faithful to the first half of the semi-autobiographical novel by Yan Sogil (Yang Sŏg-il) (1997). In 1958, a large amount of iron was found in the ruins of a bombed-out military factory in central Osaka, right next to the Korean ghetto. When the first discovery was sold for a small fortune, a fierce scramble to illegally raid the compound at night and dig for the iron began. The young Korean men and women who did this are the main characters of the story. Of particular importance is a young Korean couple, Kim Yoshio (Yamamoto Tarō), who becomes the leader of one such group, and Hatsuko (Ryoo Hyoun-Kyoung), a girl who falls in love with him.

Kim's direction focuses on the river that separates the two main stages of the film, the ghetto and the factory ruin. The river becomes the main gateway into these two stages, and the film depicts a constant going to and fro between the two. The dialogue in the play *Solitude* constantly foregrounds a river that its main characters cross. Here, in this film, the movements across the boundary waters, which are often crisis-ridden, again function as a powerful trope of the lives of resident Koreans. Yoshio one day returns to this ghetto, his birthplace, on a boat. Taking this as a cue, the Koreans decide to use boats to carry and smuggle across iron ore that they have dug up.

The scenes on the river and the riverbanks, the scenes of departures and arrivals, are clearly the key moments in the film, as these are depicted in extended sequences. In these, Kim relies on close-ups and travelling shots to clearly show the faces of those on the boat and those who are left behind or waiting. He carefully shoots the faces of the crowd, baring the painful anticipation of those who are concerned as to whether their family members have returned safely or if the scavenging was successful. Such scenes are connected to the resident Koreans' experience of moving between Korea and Japan, a journey on which the fate or survival of whole

concept, an emphasis later made also by Chong Wi Shin as he underlines the concept as the main theme of his plays. See Chong Wi Shin (1995: 1–26).

16. Based on Kara's and Satoh's interests in other parts of Asia and Japanese colonialism, Nishidoh Kōjin situates their works as postcolonial. See Nishidoh Kōjin (2006: 62–63).

17. The process of making *Through the Night* is discussed by Kim, the novelist Yan Sogil, the screenwriter Maruyama Shōichi, and others in Maruyama Shōichi and *Through the Night* Production Committee (2002).

18. Kim had the support of other resident Koreans such as the author Yan and producer Kaku. In this, he was similar to Sai Yōichi when Sai made his first feature film on resident Koreans, *All under the Moon*, which was also based on an original novel by Yan Sogil. The producer in that instance was Lee Bongou. See Lee Bongou (1994). Lee's memoirs describe the making of this film. In it, he describes Kim Sujin and the Ryozanpaku as being at the centre of 'resident Korean culture' (*zainichi karuchā*) in Tokyo during the early 1990s. See Lee Bongou (2007: 71–77).

19. See the documentary *Yorukake: The Film* Through the Night *Day by Day* (*Yorukake: Eiga* yoru o kakete *no hibi*).

families usually depended. Among such sequences, the sinking of one boat and the retrieval of its goods is depicted in particular detail.

The trope of moving across the river, representing a psychic movement between Korea and Japan, reflects a hope of return. Although born in Tokyo, Kim himself, when young, planned eventually to 'repatriate' to Korea.[20] For resident Koreans, their departures from Korea, as well as a repatriation movement to North Korea (*Kita chōsen kikan undō*) from 1959 onwards, were defining experiences in their pre-war and post-war history. In the repatriation movement, as many as 90,000 resident Koreans departed for North Korea. The memory of such crossings would have been especially acute to Kim, who grew up during the heyday of this movement in the 1960s.[21]

Several central tropes in the film come directly from the original novel *Through the Night*, written by Yan Sogil in 1994. One is clearly iron, and identification with a metal as a means of survival. The antecedents of Yan's novel were earlier works of fiction: Kaikō Takeshi's *Nippon Sanmon Opera* (*The Japanese Three Penny Opera*) of 1959 and Komatsu Sakyō's sci-fi *Nippon-Appachi-zoku* (*The Japanese Apache*) of 1964, both inspired by the same historical reality of resident Koreans living on scavenged iron in Osaka during the 1950s. Yan's novel, departing from works by Kaikō and Komatsu, resituates the scavenging as that carried out by resident Koreans and not by the Japanese poor (Kaikō) or super-humans (Komatsu). Stripped of their Japanese citizenship after the collapse of Imperial Japan in 1945, Koreans faced especially stark economic hardships in Japan during that time and for several decades that followed. They consequently had no choice but to engage in illegal activities such as those described in *Through the Night*.[22] Takayuki Tatsumi correctly situates the three novels, with their focus on human lives and metal, as embodiments of a cyborgian conception that belongs to a 'genealogy of metallocentric imagination' in Japanese popular culture, which during the 1990s was embodied in the *Tetsuo* film series by Tsukamoto Shinya.[23] Tatsumi, in his analysis, also underlines a conception of the North American Apache, because of the defiant posture of metal scavengers against the Japanese authorities. While the conception of an Apache does not appear in Yan's novel, the Korean community fighting for their lives at the margins of Japanese society can indeed be conflated with images of the North American Apache in history interpreted as such (Takayuki Tatsumi 2006: 155–64). Tatsumi's reading of the novel *Through the Night* is therefore also applicable to Kim's film adaptation.

Not considered by Tatsumi is the historical aspect of the Koreans' fascination with iron that is depicted in *Through the Night*. There, the Koreans are not taking part in the forging of the iron at all, an industry that became the basis of the Japanese economy as it revived after World War II, at first through the demand for military supplies for the US forces fighting the Korean War. The film shows that their work had only to do with digging up and carrying the iron. As such, their scavenging here is reminiscent of the work carried out by Koreans in post-war Japan. As it had been for Chong Wi Shin's parents, the iron-scrapping business was the main means of support for resident Koreans during the 1950s (Kim Chang-jeon 2004: 151). Moreover, another industry in which Koreans

The documentary is included in *Through the Night*, 133 min. (Tōei, 2004), available on DVD. Kobiyama, an actor and playwright for Ryozanpaku, also began his career in theatre with the Situation Theatre. See Morris (2007: 18). Kobiyama and several other Ryozanpaku actors also appeared in a fantasy film *Ruts in the Rain* (*Ame no wadachi*, dir. Itō Nobuyuki, 1993), although Kim and Chong did not take part in it.

20. I learned this in my interview with Kim and the writer Shinotō Yuri on 29 July 2006.

21. Kim graduated from the Department of Electrical Engineering, Tō kai University, and planned eventually to make use of his practical studies and training in North Korea. On the repatriations of resident Koreans to North Korea in the twentieth century, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki (2007). A Japanese film that depicts those repatriations as the backdrop to its story is *Foundry Town* (*Kyūpora no aru machi*, dir. Urayama Kirirō, 1962).

22. For their hardships in the 1950s, following World War II, see Kim Chang-jeon (2004: 100–03, 140–43, 151–58). The repatriation to North Korea movement became a viable option for them under these circumstances.

23. Kim Sujin also acts on television and in films, and he has appeared in three

became a main source of labour in Japan was mining, work that also consisted of digging and collecting. Koreans became the major labour source of the Japanese mining industry in the pre-war years and continued to be well into the 1950s.[24] It is symbolic in this regard that Kakeru, Ageha's ex-lover in the play *Solitude,* is digging for gold, the sole reason he moved to his present town.

Another significant trope in the film adaptation of *Through the Night* is the fire, another carryover from *Solitude*. At the end of the play, the heroine, Ageha, is mistakenly identified by the mob as having started a fire and is lynched and killed. Her murder is reminiscent of a massacre of Koreans in Tokyo after the great Kanto earthquake of 1923, when the Koreans were falsely blamed for arson and poisoning the wells. In the film, after showing the constant surveillance and brutal treatment of the Koreans by the police, a police collaborator sets fire to the ghetto and burns it down. This climax of the film was a highlight of Kim's film-making also, as he burned down the whole film set that had been painstakingly constructed by his staff and the volunteers. Through depicting this wanton destruction of lives and buildings, the play *Solitude* and the film both highlight human perseverance. Ageha, as she ascends to heaven, cries out that she will still continue to cross many waters. Ageha's subjectivity came to be shared by her lover Hikaru as he cried out that he would wait forever for her alone; hence the title *One Thousand Years of Solitude*. The defiant posture that Ageha takes toward boundary crossing is an expression of the resident Korean ethos as Kim and Chong understand it.

Hatsuko, the heroine of *Through the Night*, is similar to Ageha also in that she has a past of having had to work as a bar hostess and prostitute.[25] She stopped menstruating because she was traumatized by the experience of selling her body, and it was only after encountering Yoshio that her periods started again. With this, she became determined to start anew with Yoshio, and the film's final scenes consist of Hatsuko wilfully walking alone in her Korean clothes towards the horizon and Yoshio refusing to cooperate with the police. The hero and the heroine are separated at the end of this film, but they vow nevertheless to meet again in the future. In their determination toward each other, they again resemble Ageha and Hikaru, the couple in *Solitude*.[26]

Kim's second film, *Dreaming of Light*, is based on a novella and screenplay by Kara Juro.[27] This film, on the whole a quieter and more fantastic story than *Through the Night*, depicts a small glass factory on the brink of financial ruin. In focusing on this setting, the work manifests Kara's recent interest in depicting the world of blue-collar workers (see Horikiri Naoto 2007: 247–56). Trying to save his factory, the young owner, Yōjirō (Inari Takuo), borrows money from loan sharks, which leads to his factory's further collapse. Kara Juro plays the hero Ikeya, an artisan who specializes in polishing glass. He comes to form a strange friendship with a young woman, Yōko (Satō Megumi), Yōjirō's sweetheart during his adolescence. Yōko's father used to own a glass factory like Yōjirō's, but he committed suicide when his factory went bankrupt. Like Ikeya, Yōko also has the ability to polish glass. This film is similar to the play *Solitude* in that it too centres on a woman whose main obsession in life is to polish glass. The glass as such embodies the purity and innocence of liminal

films directed by Tsukamoto Shinya, playing the protagonist's father in *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer* (*Tetsuo: bodii hammer*, 1992). Kim writes of his liking of Tsukamoto's style in theatre and films and finds they share a similar fascination with human bodies and violence (Kim Sujin 2003: 32–35). Tom Mes writes that Tsukamoto was working in experimental theatre at the beginning of his career and was also greatly influenced by Kara Juro (Mes 2005: 31–34, 36, 83).

24. The Japanese coal-mining industry actively recruited Koreans as labourers beginning in the early twentieth century. By 1944, over 60 per cent of all the miners in Hokkaido were Koreans (Lie 2001: 92–93). The Korean peasants, who lost land due to the Japanese colonial system, responded positively to the offer of jobs in the mines and began arriving in Japan en mass (Kim Chang-jeon 2004: 23–26). Kim Chang-jeon writes that later, in the 1930s, many Korean workers were brought to work in the Japanese mining industry as 'forced labour' (*kyōsei renkō*) (Kim Chang-jeon 2004: 73–75). An important film about resident Koreans in the mining industry is *Nianchan* (*My Second Brother*, dir. Imamura Shōhei, 1959), which depicts four orphaned siblings in a mining town in Kyushu. The film is an adaptation of the 1958 best seller written by resident

characters themselves. Midway into the narrative, Ikeya has a car accident while trying to save Yōjirō. While Ikeya is in a coma, Yōko has no recourse but to continue the glass polishing on her own. Her only means for that is the sand at a rural primary school that is now submerged under a lake. She dives into the lake for the sand and, while underwater, plays an old organ that unleashes a beautiful melody, which travels up to the surface. Through this sequence, shot in slow motion, and other sequences that include close-ups of glass reflecting light, the film focuses on the significance of beauty and aesthetic living in the mundane, everyday life of the working class. The coexistence of beauty and the mundane, or even vulgarity, is emphasized in the opening scene, in which Ikeya uses his naked buttocks to end-polish his glass work. No matter the means, the characters are obsessed with polishing and thereby bringing out the beauty of glass, which, like the music that the heroine discovers underwater, are hidden treasures found only by those who sense their presence and make efforts.

At the same time, the film attests to some negative implications of glass. The glass becomes a more ambivalent trope in that it is also used as a means of torture by the loan sharks to hurt Yojirō. In the process, Yōko also comes to be burned by a glass. The fascination with glass as a metaphor is also found in Kara's play that was performed by the Ryozanpaku, *Call from the City of Young Women* (hereafter called *City of Young Women*). Kara has been an extremely prolific playwright, writing and directing numerous works since beginning his career in the 1960s. The fascination with the inanimate carried by this play, however, is one reason that *City of Young Women* was revived by Kim and the Ryozanpaku nine years after Kara's original production. *City of Young Women* is a fantastic story, narrated in the main by Taguchi, a man who wanders into a strange city in search of his long-lost sister Yukiko. He finds that his sister has become a mistress of a dictator of the city, Dr Franken, who is played by Kim Sujin in the video version of the play. Dr Franken is obsessed by glass and is trying to remake Yukiko into a figure of glass. As a start, he has already replaced her womb with one of glass. In this instance, the glass represents not only beauty but also inhumanity that can pervade the human body and mind.[28] Dr Franken is also a former soldier of the Kwantung Army (the Japanese Manchurian Army) of the 1930s and World War II, the main military body that oversaw Japan's invasion and territorial expansion into northern China. He is haunted by his wartime memories of his regimental commander, and also by his sense of being the sole survivor in his regiment. His present utopian project of a 'City of Young Women' is therefore directly connected to prewar Japanese colonialism on the Asian continent.[29] Manchuria, to which the Japanese facilitated the migration of Koreans, was part of Imperial Japan, and in this, *City of Young Women* again cross-references twentieth-century colonial history as experienced by Koreans. In the final scene of *City of Young Women*, Kim literally floods the stage with 'glass' objects that resemble *pachinko* balls coming out when someone hits the jackpot. This is yet another show of the beauty of glass, as well as another use of resident Koreans' history, with their post-war connections to the Japanese *pachinko* industry.[30]

Korean author Yasumoto Sueko (2003), *Nianchan: Jyussai no shōjo no nikki* (*My Second Brother: The Diaries of a Ten-Year-Old*), Fukuoka: Nishinihon shinbunsha.

25. Chong's other plays and screenplays also abound with figures of bar hostesses and prostitutes. Among his plays, such characters appear in *Tomorrow with Gelsomina* (*Ashita, Gelsomina to*) and *Legend of Mermaids*, and among his screenplays, they are found in *All under the Moon*, *Tokyo Delux* (*Heisei musekinin ikka: Tokyo delux*, dir. Sai Yōichi, 1995), and *Dog Race* (*Inu, hashiru: Dog race*, dir. Sai Yōichi, 1998).

26. The second half of Yan's original novel focuses on the romance between Yoshio, held at the Ōmura Detention Camp for illegal Korean immigrants in Nagasaki, and Hatsuko. When I interviewed Kim on 29 July 2006, he was preparing to adapt this second half as a film.

27. The novella *Dreaming of Light* (*Garasu no tsukai*) is included in Kara Juro (2005: 5–106). According to a press release for the film, Kara wrote the novella and the screenplay for Kim's second film.

28. Kara Juro was fascinated with inanimate objects in the mid-1980s, and he wrote a play, *The Vinyl Castle* (*Bynyl no shiro*), in 1985, the same year in

What are other significances of the inanimate – glass and iron, in particular – in Kim's works? Takayuki Tatsumi argues that the fascination with the inanimate in general is an important aspect of 'the metallocentric imagination'. He writes, 'The focus of twentieth-century art was moving from the vital and the organic to the geometrical and the inorganic. [...] [T]he new talents of art had come to prefer the inanimate to the animate, and minerals to animals and vegetation' (Takayuki Tatsumi 2006: 165). An insight into glass as a metaphor is also provided by anthropologist Imafuku Ryuta as he observes glassmaking in a Japanese factory currently staffed by foreign workers:

> Glass can be mixed with all other kinds of glass. In that sense, it is fluid like water. Georges Bataille has aptly described animal intelligence, which does not objectivize [*sic*] things or create cognitive boundaries between objects, as a state in which 'water exists within water'. [...] If so, there is a strange correspondence between the dark faces of all the workers at this factory in recent years, which suggest the existence of workers from different countries, and the ontology of glass which resembles a fluid. Glass is a hard amorphous substance without crystals that is made by melting silica, limestone, and sodium carbonate at a high temperature until they fuse, whereupon the mixture is rapidly cooled. Thus glass itself is a composite of different materials. By the same token, the cultural heterogeneity now developing among the glass factory workers constitutes a hybrid chaos that rejects the formation of a solitary crystalline structure like the local culture of the workers' homelands, such as Brazil, Thailand, Iran, China, or Peru. When these two levels are juxtaposed, it is evident that glass, figuratively speaking, possesses a privileged nature as a cultural metaphor that vividly suggests the migration, hybridity, and intermixing of countless human beings, a phenomenon that is sweeping society today.
>
> (Imafuku Ryuta 1997)

Imafuku's interpretation of glass as consisting of a mixture of different elements, and thus embodying migration or hybridity, is a conception that situates it as a metaphor for the resident Koreans, who are seen by many as constituting a hybrid, betwixt and between two national cultures and peoples. David Chapman, in his discussion of post-1970s resident Koreans, makes reference to Homi Bhabha's notion of 'the third space', which enables hybrid identities to develop. According to Chapman, such space is 'limitless and provides ongoing negotiation of identities and their many imbrications. It is a space where identities are not static and homogenized but fluid and constantly changing, seeking out new possibilities'. As such, the conception comes close to ideals and identities that have been sought by some resident Koreans especially since the 1970s (Chapman 2004: 39). Imafuku also associates glass with water, both malleable entities. In Kim's directing of *City of Young Women*, he indeed juxtaposes glass with water in the climax of the play, at one point having the actors shoot out the water onstage, showing this as though their water is coming out of bottles. In the film *Dreaming of Light*, Yōko, in a sequence that was discussed earlier, dives to the bottom of a lake to retrieve sand with which to polish the glass. Kim uses special effects to highlight the water as it reflects light,

which he wrote *City of Young Women*. For a discussion of these two works, see Senda Akihiko (2007: 229–34). As Tom Mes (2005: 36) writes, it was in the same year that Tsukamoto Shinya became a professional in theatre, launching his company, the Sea Monster Theatre (Kaijū Shiatā).

29. Louise Young (1999: 29–35) writes that the 'Kwangtung Army [...] defined the nature of [the Japanese] empire in the Northeast [Asia]'.

30. Resident Koreans were turned away from holding regular jobs in Japan during the 1950s, so the *pachinko* parlours provided a second major industry for them, after the iron-scrapping business (Kim Changjeon 2004: 151). According to Nomura Susumu (1999: 130), as many as two-thirds of Japanese pachinko parlours in the 1990s were said to be still owned and managed by resident Koreans and naturalized Koreans.

as seen both from underwater and also, with a crane shot, the water surface. In the film, the moulding of glass in its liquid state is also presented in medium shots and close-ups several times, thereby conflating the glass with transparent liquids such as water. Like water, the glass changes its shape in response to the pressures placed on it, and in this regard it is a representation of early resident Korean experiences in Japan: coerced into carrying out the roles determined by others but persevering by adapting to different circumstances.

Together with this use of glass as a metaphor for hybridity and malleability, Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* provides another useful reference point. *The Glass Menagerie* employs glass in the form of glass animals that Laura, the main character of the play, collects. Those glass animals are connected to her vulnerability, which comes from being physically challenged and shy. Transparency is another aspect of glass that is often understood, a transparency that is not to be conflated with non-existence. Williams's play shows Laura's lonely character in full colour, a character that Annette J. Saddik (1999: 65) argues is struggling with the social realities of a changing world and not 'immune to the alienating powers of industrial capitalism'. Vulnerability is certainly an aspect made manifest by Korean characters appearing in Kim's (and Chong's) plays and films. We may again interpret such vulnerability in part as determined by the past victimization and trauma of Koreans under Japanese rule. Recognizing them this way, they can also possibly be an internalization of stereotypes constructed by non-Korean Japanese, not essential attributes of the Koreans living in Japan. In *Solitude*, clearly identified Korean characters are Ageha and her insane grandmother, as well as Fire-rat (Hinezumi), who is in love with Ageha and is something of a trickster in the play. These characters are all variously traumatized by their pasts and by history, torn between their present locale and their past and future 'across the river'. The characters in *Dreaming of Light* are also similar to Ageha and others, in that they too are threatened or traumatized by events that have occurred in the past and that may occur again in the very near future, specifically financial bankruptcies and dispersions of families. While recognized and presented as an object of beauty, the glass, then, also bespeaks vulnerability and trauma. As does Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, however, these Korean characters show that although they are marginalized and often disregarded by others, their narrated lives can resonate in the lives of others. The glass in Kim's works, moreover, never breaks as one of Laura's glass objects does in *The Glass Menagerie*.

Conclusion

The plays and films by Kim Sujin, Chong Wi Shin and Ryozanpaku that I have discussed here are connected to the changing identities of resident Koreans, especially as they have developed since the 1980s. The cultural and economic policies initiated by Park Chung-Hee during the 1960s and the 1970s were successful to a degree, and South Korea has achieved considerable economic success. This, and the stagnation of the North, have destabilized the norms that existed for the majority of resident Koreans in Japan since the 1950s, namely an identification with the North and a symbiotic relationship with that homeland. The deteriorating belief in the

North and in Chongryun, the North Korean organization in Japan, has resulted since the 1980s in an increasing number of North Koreans in Japan becoming either naturalized Japanese citizens or South Korean nationals.[31] As of 2003, five-sixths of resident Koreans are South Korean nationals, an opposite ratio of what was the case during the 1950s. Resident Koreans' assimilation into mainstream Japanese society has also proceeded rapidly during this time (Kim Chang-jeon 2004: 192).[32] The social context of the works by Kim Sujin, then, is that for many resident Koreans, a total identification with 'what has been left behind' remained no longer a viable option. In this regard, the works by Kim, Chong and Ryozanpaku, while focusing on the innocence and beauty of everyday lives, also delineate a particular history and identity formation on the part of the resident Koreans. Instead of enacting an essential Korean ethnicity or culture onstage or through films, Kim and Chong incline toward denoting migration, hybridity and being situated as betwixt and between. By doing so, they depict the distinct niche occupied by resident Koreans in Japan, which distinguishes them from both the Koreans on the mainland and the Japanese. Kim and Chong make use of political theatre performances of the earlier period in Japan as a means through which to magnify and remake into their art the resident Korean experiences of the past two centuries.

31. On Chongryun, see Sonia Ryang (1997).

32. For example, it was in 1984 that the ratio of resident Koreans marrying Japanese came to be more than the number of Koreans marrying other Koreans. In the year 2000, the ratio of resident Koreans marrying fellow Koreans fell below 20 per cent (Kim Chang-jeon 2004: 185).

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Market swings: Stock-market listings and the Korean film industry

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Abstract

The rise and fall of national film movements are seldom attributed to trends in film finance. Yet, it is likely no coincidence that the recent creative renaissance in South Korean cinema, seen as lasting from the late 1990s to the present, mirrored a vast expansion and diversification of the sources of finance available to Korean film-makers. Venture capital, government funding, financing from large business conglomerates, TV finance and even cash raised from ordinary citizens on the Internet all played important roles in this process. One other source of finance that reached the peak of its importance in the mid-2000s was the listing of production companies or distributors on the local stock exchange. As more and more Korean film companies found direct and indirect means to go public – particularly in the years 2005 and 2006 – a new 'wave' of funds rushed into the industry. This article will provide a brief overview of the Korean film industry's relationship with local stock markets in the first decade of this century, and the effect this has had on the overall development of Korean cinema.

Keywords

film financing
Korean stock market
chaebol
netizen funds
hallyu

The rise and fall of national film movements are seldom attributed to trends in film finance. Broad social changes, the rise of new competing film aesthetics, political developments or the individual fates of leading directors tend to command greater attention from film scholars and critics. However, in many environments, issues related to film finance can also play a determining role in the types and quantity of films produced – and a sudden shift in the availability of financing can have lasting effects.

It is likely no coincidence that the recent creative renaissance in South Korean cinema, seen as lasting from the late 1990s to the present, mirrored a vast expansion and diversification of the sources of finance available to Korean film-makers. Venture capital, government funding, financing from large business conglomerates (Korea's so-called *chaebol*), TV finance and even cash raised from ordinary citizens on the Internet all played important roles in this process. One other source of finance that reached the peak of its importance in the mid-2000s was the listing of production companies or distributors on the local stock exchange. As more and more Korean film companies found direct and indirect means to go public – particularly in the years 2005 and 2006 – a new 'wave' of funds rushed into the industry.

This article will provide a brief overview of the Korean film industry's relationship with local stock markets in the first decade of this century and the effect this has had on the overall development of Korean cinema. At

the time of this writing, the boom in stock-market listings has decidedly passed, but its influence continues to be felt.

Korea is certainly not the only case of a film industry that was influenced by a rush of stock-market listings. Perhaps most famously in recent times, German media firms which listed on the Neuer Markt stock exchange (considered the German equivalent to New York's NASDAQ exchange) in the late 1990s saw a tremendous surge in the paper value of their companies as investors frantically bid up prices to astronomical levels. One of the first media companies to go public, EM.TV, saw its share price rocket more than 33,000 per cent between its initial public offering (IPO) in 1997 and its peak in mid-2000. By 2000, the combined value of the 30+ media-related firms listed on the exchange reached almost DM 40 billion ($20 billion), transforming many of them into major players in the international film business (Deiser 2000).

Much of that money was used in the financing and acquisition of high-profile international films, primarily from Hollywood. Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*, for example, raised $65 million of its total $100 million budget from the German company IEG/Splendid, which received all international rights to the film in return (Lyons and Petrikin 1999). One of the biggest deals was a DM 550 million ($300 million) output deal between Kinowelt and Hollywood studio Warner Brothers, which gave the German company TV rights to scores of Warner Brothers' movies and television series (Guider 1999). Eventually, however, the Neuer Markt's fortunes would turn and the resulting crash pushed many of these companies into bankruptcy. By September 2002, the Neuer Markt itself (which had become synonymous with the worst excesses of the dot-com boom) was closed down as part of a broader reorganization of German stock exchanges, and the era of easy money was over (Meza and Harris 2002).

Compared to Germany, South Korea's stock-market boom was far more modest, although its effect on the local film industry was just as significant. Before considering the effects of the boom, however, let us consider how Korea's other various sources of film finance came to develop.

Up until the 1980s, most Korean films were financed by capital-rich companies based in Seoul, which made the majority of their profits from imported films. An import quota required film companies to produce a certain number of Korean features for each foreign film imported, and such 'quota quickies' tended to be shot in great haste on limited budgets. In addition, theatrical distribution in South Korea was divided into distinct territories, and production companies in Seoul could partially finance a film by pre-selling it to regional distributors located in Busan, Daegu or other cities (Paquet 2005: 36).

In the 1990s, many of Korea's largest business conglomerates such as Samsung and Daewoo moved into the film industry and began financing films with their own resources. With more importance placed on the profitability of films, and more money invested in stars, marketing and production values, budgets began to rise. At this time the *chaebol* also became actively involved in developing the local exhibition, video and cable TV markets in order to increase the revenues generated from each film (Hwang 2001).

However, profits from the film industry were not as strong as was hoped for, and with the onset of the 1997 Asian financial crisis (known

locally as the 'IMF Crisis'), many of the biggest *chaebol* took the opportunity to close their film divisions. In 1999, Samsung Entertainment, the most active of the *chaebol*'s film operations, closed its doors shortly after the release of the smash hit *Shiri* (*Swiri*).

The exit of the *chaebol* coincided with a strong recovery in the local stock market. Against the backdrop of a boom in technology investment, a large number of venture capital companies began to invest in the film industry. From the late 1990s until the mid-2000s, venture capital emerged as the largest single source of finance for the rapidly developing Korean film industry. Rather than invest in individual titles as the *chaebol* did, most venture capital companies preferred to participate in special funds that invested a portion of its capital in a broader slate of films. This trend was encouraged by the government, which would often contribute capital to such funds through the Small Business Corporation or the Korean Film Council (KOFIC).

From 1998 to the end of 2005, the film industry saw the launch of 48 funds worth a combined $535 million. Most funds had an operating term of 5–6 years, and would devote 50–70 per cent of their capital to film financing, with the remainder placed in stocks or other investments. From 1998 to 2005, the Small Business Corporation contributed a total of $121 million to film funds, and would often take a heavier share of losses in the event that the funds failed to turn an overall profit. Meanwhile the Korean Film Council invested $46 million over this time, although KOFIC tended to operate on an equal footing with other investors (Paquet 2007a).

Meanwhile, the early 2000s saw the emergence of a new group of *chaebol* as a significant force in the local film industry. Most active were CJ Entertainment, a division of the CJ Group, and Mediaplex/Showbox, a division of the Orion Group, although other *chaebol* such as the Lotte Group and Prime were also active. At the time of this writing, major telecoms firms such as SK Telecom and KTH were also coming to play an increasingly large role as a financier of Korean films. The most active of the *chaebol*, CJ Entertainment, participated as the main investor on twenty titles in 2007 for a total investment of $86 million (Paquet 2007b).

Some other smaller sources of finance for the film industry include international sales, TV, and so-called 'netizen funds'. For certain films with a strong appeal in other countries, international sales came to play a major role. According to figures published by the Korean Film Council, total film exports for South Korea rose from $492,000 in 1997 to an all-time high of almost $76 million in 2005, due primarily to an explosion of interest in Korean pop culture in Japan. At the peak of the so-called 'Korean Wave' (*hallyu*), films featuring top stars such as Jang Dong-gun or Lee Byung-heon would regularly bring in between $2–$5 million for Japanese rights. The highest price ever paid for a Korean film was for Hur Jin-ho's 2005 feature *April Snow* (*Oechul*), rumoured to be over $7 million (the film would ultimately earn over $24 million at the Japanese box office, thanks in large part to the casting of megastar Bae Yong-joon). Many of these deals were pre-sales, made before or during the production of a film, which were particularly helpful to producers in getting a film made. However enthusiasm for the Korean Wave eventually began to fade, with total exports falling to $24.5 million in 2006 and $12.3 million in 2007.

South Korean TV companies have been comparatively less-active investors in the film industry, particularly compared to their counterparts in Europe. One area in which there has been active cooperation between film and TV broadcasters is in the production of low-budget films in high-definition (HD) format. As major TV channels began broadcasting a portion of their content in high definition, demand for HD content encouraged film companies and broadcasters to work together. Box office hit *My Scary Girl* (*Dalkom, salbyeorhan yeonin*) from 2006 is one example: a co-production between leading production company Sidus FNH and broadcaster MBC, the $800,000 film was intended mostly for TV audiences, but emerged as an unexpected hit in theatres and earned over $16 million in box-office revenues.

A last minor, but unusual, source of finance came from ordinary viewers themselves. So-called 'netizen funds' operated via web portals allowed the public to participate as investors in selected titles. Originally launched in 2000 on a small scale and intended more as a marketing tool than a significant source of finance, the funds stirred up strong interest on the part of the public, often selling out in a manner of minutes (Paquet 2001). The government would eventually step in and create a legal framework for the funds; however, their use was largely discontinued after 2005.

It was against the development of these various sources of film finance that stock-market listings emerged as a major new source of capital for Korean film companies in the 2000s. It is perhaps useful from the start to distinguish between two different types of listings: larger companies which succeeded in holding initial public offerings (IPOs) on the KOSDAQ or KSE exchanges, or companies which achieved listings through 'backdoor' means such as reverse acquisitions. It was the latter route in particular that led to the excess that ultimately plagued the industry.

South Korea originally had two major stock exchanges, Korea Stock Exchange (KSE) and KOSDAQ, before they were integrated and renamed under the umbrella organization Korea Exchange (KRX) on 27 January 2005. The Korea Stock Exchange was established in 1956 with twelve listed companies, and entered a period of rapid growth from the 1960s and 1970s onwards. It is considered the main stock market of South Korea, and from 2005 was renamed the Stock Market Division of the KRX. The KOSDAQ market, like the Neuer Markt, was modelled after NASDAQ, and was launched in 1996 to focus on small- and medium-sized businesses, particularly IT firms or companies funded by venture capital. It is currently named the KOSDAQ Market Division of the KRX. (The KRX also includes a third division, the Futures Market Division, which has less direct relevance to the film industry.)

From the 1990s or earlier, many Korean film companies dreamed of accessing the funds that become available when public investors are allowed to buy a portion of the company through shares. Film industry professionals also took notice when several well-known music companies were listed on the KOSDAQ exchange, beginning with SM Entertainment in April 2000 and followed by Poibos (May 2000), Yedang Entertainment (December 2000) and YBM Seoul Records (January 2001). Although a public listing on a stock market entails numerous obligations such as the

issuing of profit statements and timely reporting of news, it remained a desired goal for many people in the film industry.

One key development that further focused Korean film companies' attention on the stock market was the acquisition of production/distribution company Cinema Service by listed firm Locus Holdings in 2001. Cinema Service, headed by producer/director Kang Woo-suk (*Two Cops*), was founded as a small production company in 1993, but by the end of the decade it had grown into one of the most successful Korean distributors, thanks to hit films like *Attack the Gas Station* (*Juyuso seupgyeok-sageon*, 1999) and *Tell Me Something* (*Tel mi sseomding*, 1999). Its acquisition by Locus Holdings, which was listed on the KOSDAQ exchange, gave the company access to funds raised through the stock market (Alford 2001). Later, in April 2002, Cinema Service and Locus Holdings merged to form a new entity called Plenus Entertainment.

With Cinema Service having achieved this 'backdoor' listing on the KOSDAQ market, many other Korean film companies began to actively pursue the goal of going public. One of the first was CJ Entertainment, which at the time owned a stake in Hollywood studio DreamWorks and which ranked as one of the biggest investors in local films. In early 2001, the company applied to the KOSDAQ market to make an initial public offering (IPO), and received formal approval on 28 November. It issued shares on 5 February 2002, becoming the first Korean film company ever to hold an IPO. A total of 30 per cent of its stock was offered up for sale (3.71 million shares), and its share price doubled during its first day from an initial 12,000 *won* to 24,000 *won* per share. In the weeks that followed the price rose to a high of 32,000 *won* per share, before entering a longer period of decline (Paquet 2002).

However other Korean film companies were less successful in pursuing this direct path to the stock market. DVD/investment company Starmax also applied to the KOSDAQ exchange for an IPO at roughly the same time as CJ Entertainment; however, its application was declined by the exchange. Leading production company Myung Films, following the commercial success of such features as *The Contact* (*Jeopsok*, 1997), *Happy End* (*Haepi aendeu*, 1999) and *Joint Security Area* (*Gongdong-gyeongbi-guyeok JSA*, 2000), began formal preparations for an IPO in May 2001, but its application too was eventually rejected by a KOSDAQ committee in July 2002.

The decision by the KOSDAQ exchange set a precedent for film companies such as Myung, which were involved solely in production, in contrast to larger firms such as CJ Entertainment, which had interests in exhibition and other related businesses. The concerns voiced by the KOSDAQ committee were that, due to the nature of the film business, a production company would be unable to produce stable revenues on a year-to-year basis. In other words, the inherent fluctuations in revenue experienced by production companies over time made them ill-suited to the expectations and demands of stock-market investors (Yun 2002). Prior to the decision on Myung Films, other Korean companies such as KangJeGyu Films, Sidus and Tube Entertainment had announced plans to list on the KOSDAQ exchange, but ultimately they would pursue different courses of action.

It was not until the mid-2000s that the stock market came to play a much larger role in the Korean film industry. Although a successful IPO

was carried out by Mediaplex – the parent company of major distributor Showbox and exhibition chain Megabox – in July 2006 (Paquet 2006), most companies were pursuing a different trend: to achieve a listing through the use of reverse takeovers.

A reverse takeover is when a (typically weak) publicly listed firm is merged with a private company, and through an exchange of shares the private company comes to hold a significant stake or gain management control of the listed firm. The process allows for private companies to become publicly traded companies without going through the lengthy procedure of holding an IPO. For the publicly listed partner company, the deal may offer the opportunity for a graceful exit. Often the entire process can be completed in mere weeks.

In 2003 and 2004, a number of well-known film companies were successful in carrying out reverse takeovers and gaining a listing on the stock market. In September 2003, talent management/production company iHQ merged with KOSDAQ-listed undergarments company La Vora. Production company Sidus also achieved a stock-market listing in January 2004 when it merged with security firm Securicom. Meanwhile that same month, Myung Films finally achieved its aim of going public when it was acquired together with KangJeGyu Films by tool manufacturing company Seshin Buffalo, listed on the KSE exchange. The merged company would eventually change its name to MK Pictures.

However, the real boom in backdoor stock-market listings began in the year 2005. The impetus for the wave of reverse takeovers that took place in this period was a surge of interest among South Korean investors towards new media and the Korean Wave. Most significantly, media reports from Japan, which documented a surge of consumer interest in Korean stars and pop culture, seemed to indicate a transformed economic landscape for the Korean film industry. Japan ranks as the second largest film market in the world in dollar terms after the United States, and the prospect of securing a lasting share of this market led commentators to predict a significant boost in earning power for Korean content.

At the same time, moves by major Korean telecoms firms to invest in content providers provided additional optimism for the sector's growth potential. SK Telecom bought a share in iHQ in early 2005, and KT together with its mobile division KTH jointly acquired the recently renamed Sidus FNH in September that year (Mun 2006). Meanwhile, the rise of the Korean Wave as a pan-Asian phenomenon coincided with a cooling of investor sentiment towards biotech industries, and new government-introduced restrictions on real-estate investment. As such, investors were on the lookout for new growth sectors.

Amidst this mood of exuberance, several entertainment-related companies executed reverse takeovers and enjoyed a steep rise in their stock prices. Fantom, a small manufacturer of golf balls, saw its stock price rise from 700 *won* to over 30,000 *won* per share after the acquisition of video company Woosung Entertainment and several star management firms. Banpotech, a tent manufacturing company, acquired Star M Entertainment – the talent firm representing major star Jang Dong-gun – and saw its stock price rocket from 4,000 *won* to 24,000 *won* per share.

In the wake of such developments, the owners of many small entertainment-related companies began to receive 'huge numbers' of offers to merge with listed firms (Mun 2006). Faced with the opportunity of securing large amounts of capital for present and future productions, many readily acquiesced. Entertainment firms that gained a stock-market listing at this time include Taewon Entertainment (May 2005), Seo Se-won Media Group (July 2005), talent management company I Star Cinema (August 2005), production company Tube Pictures (October 2005), Broadin Media (October 2005), talent management firm Good Entertainment (October 2005), TV-drama production house Eight Peaks (November 2005), Wellmade Entertainment (November 2005), Popcorn Film (January 2006), K&Entertainment (January 2006) and Dyne Film (March 2006).

A bizarre incident that took place in early 2006 helps to illustrate the sort of mania that surrounded stocks and entertainment companies at the height of the fad. On 7 February, manufacturing company Nuvotec issued an announcement that it had reached an agreement with popular actress Lee Young-ae (who rose to stardom in Asia in the television drama *Jewel in the Palace* and has appeared in such films as *JSA* and *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance*), to launch a specialized subsidiary named Lee Young-ae Inc., to be run in partnership with Lee's older brother. Nuvotec's stock price shot upwards immediately on the announcement. However, Lee, who was just leaving for Germany to serve on the jury at the Berlin International Film Festival, issued an immediate and forceful denial of the news. Just as quickly as it had risen, Nuvotec's stock price crashed and the following day Lee sued the company for libel. The exact course of events leading up to the announcement remains unclear; however, the incident represents for many observers the peak of the 'irrational exuberance' that developed around the entertainment sector in this period.

The end result of all these stock-market listings was a large infusion of capital into the film industry. In contrast to the situation in Germany in the late 1990s, when the majority of stock-market gains were spent acquiring and financing films from Hollywood, in Korea much of the windfall was invested into local films. The companies that had newly gone public were especially aggressive in expanding their production slates, given that stockholders expected clear indications of revenue growth in the quarterly reports that such companies were now obligated to file. Generally, the release of one or two films per year was not sufficient to provide such numbers – particularly when those films failed at the box office. Therefore listed companies came under increased pressure to produce more films, and to produce them quickly. Companies that failed to report consistent revenues often saw their stock price drop as a result.

In terms of the increase in total production, the Korean Film Council lists 107 films released in theatres in 2006, compared to 65 films for the year 2001. Although the 2006 total also reflects a considerable increase in the number of low-budget independent films, due to various public programmes introduced to support the distribution of independent cinema, there were also many commercial features produced in 2006 that were not successful in securing a theatrical release due to a scheduling backlog. Meanwhile, the vast amounts of financing available to the industry encouraged a rise in film budgets, particularly in the salaries of Korea's best-known stars.

As a result, even though 2006 marked an all-time high of 164 million admissions at the box office, increased competition meant that few films turned a profit. As many producers are quick to point out, the weakness of Korea's ancillary markets such as DVD and cable TV mean that a theatrical release is expected to provide 70–80 per cent of a film's revenues. This increases the risk that a film will fail to turn a profit, since it cannot recoup losses on DVD. In a sense, this places a practical limit on the number of films that can be released per year. In this way, the stock-market boom of 2005 and 2006 is often given as one prime reason for the industry-wide slump that followed in 2007 and 2008. Venture capital investors in particular suffered steep losses in 2006 and began to curtail their film financing activities in the following year. Meanwhile, the film industry as a whole grappled with efforts to reduce film budgets to a reasonable level, after the excesses of the previous years.

By 2007 many listed companies were also witnessing a steep fall in their stock prices. After seeing its stock drop precipitously in 2005 and 2006 on reported losses of 5.7 billion *won* and 1.1 billion *won* respectively, the leading shareholders of MK Pictures sold their stakes to regional broadcaster Kang Won Networks in July 2007. Tube Pictures, after securing a listing through a reverse takeover, arranged for its exit in 2007 by the same means, merging with a resource development firm and ceding management rights to the company. The company was subsequently renamed Petroholdings Corporation (Paquet 2007c). By early 2008, virtually all of the entertainment firms who had gained access to the stock market through backdoor means had made their exit.

It is true that some firms, particularly large distributors like CJ Entertainment and Mediaplex, have successfully met the challenges of operating a listed company. Other companies have struggled, however, and at present most observers view the boom in backdoor stock-market listings in 2005 and 2006 as a phenomenon that ultimately brought great harm to the film industry. Indeed, the drop in profits that was aggravated by the activities of listed firms may have helped to drive out more sustainable forms of film finance such as venture capital. At the time of this writing, the Korean film industry remains mired in a slump, and so it is hard to predict how far the consequences of the burst bubble in film finance will stretch. Nonetheless other quickly growing film industries in the region would be wise to examine and learn from the Korean film industry's troubled relationship with its local stock markets.

Note

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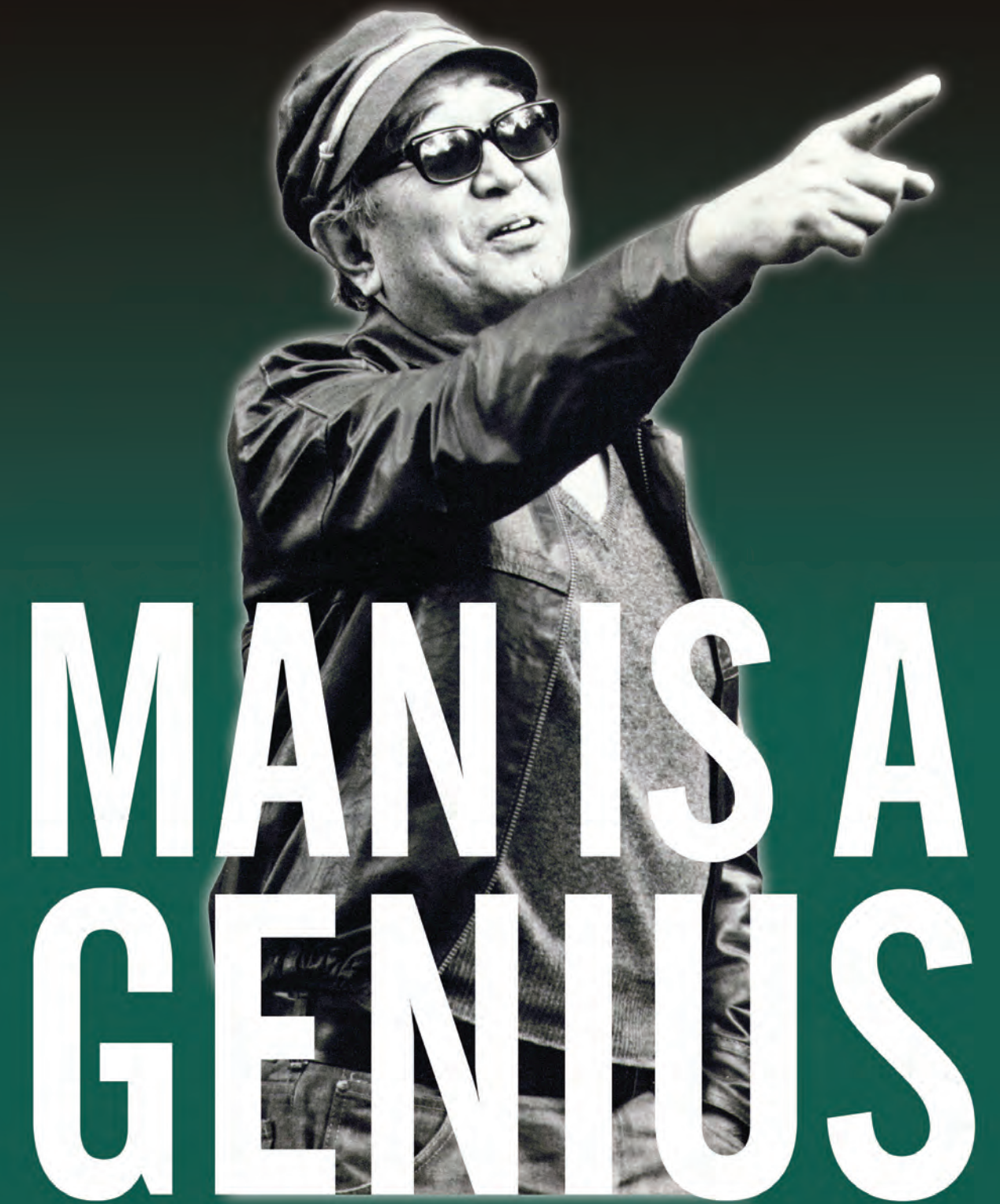

MAN IS A GENIUS

...when he is dreaming. —*Akira Kurosawa*

Book Reviews

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Time Frames: Japanese Cinema and the Unfolding of History, Scott Nygren (2007)

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 304 pp,
ISBN: 0816647070, hardback, $75;
ISBN: 0816647089, paperback, $25

Reviewed by Ryan Cook Yale University

Scott Nygren's book *Time Frames* revolves around the premise that the success of Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashomon* at the 1951 Venice Film Festival mobilized a general 'western' critical attention to the cinema of the 'non-West' and prepared the way for subsequent discoveries from amidst the world's outlying cinemas. *Time Frames* thus effectively situates Japanese film at the origin of what are by now habituated critical approaches that, first of all, seek out cinematic others; and second, seek to understand them in relation to their national and regional contexts. The book is therefore in many ways not so much about Japanese cinema *per se* as it is about the film scholarship, criticism and practice that once took note of it at Venice, and likewise not so much about Japan as about 'the West', or more properly an anglophone cosmopolitan discourse that sees in Japanese cinema not so much an other or a specialization as an area of archetypal significance in a global cinematic 'network'. For if Nygren is, on the one hand, tracking the historical influence of Japanese film on critical discourses of national and world cinema from 1951, he is, on the other hand, also exploring the continuing significance of this particular cinematic oeuvre for contemporary critics like himself who now would seem to know better than to infatuate themselves with an exceptionalism of the non-West. What does Japan have to offer a worldly critic where cosmopolitanism and a general suspicion of national boundaries would preclude the kind of modernist *japonisme* (Eisenstein, Pound, Artaud) or even the style of programmatic ideological critique (Noël Burch's Japan as alternative to Hollywood) that informed earlier critical moments? Or as Nygren poses the question, 'Why Japanese cinema?'

By way of explanation he premises the unique place of Japan in modern world history as an uncolonized late modernizer that was paradoxically 'post-modern before postmodernism', reiterating compelling arguments by the likes of Karatani Kojin and Harry Harootunian among others, in order to draw parallels between twentieth-century Japan and the contemporary situation of the developing world faced with globalization. These parallels further secure the place of Japanese cinema in the disciplinary foundations of an increasingly global and Asia-conscious film studies. Invoking Japan's rich cinematic record (Japan has at times been the world's most prolific producer of films), Nygren provides further justification for thus privileging

the subject with another book-length study, even when it seems that 'no book could add to what is already available' on the topic (this, I would argue, is a questionable assertion). These justifications will be comforting to those who make a vocation of studying the field, but one wonders if Nygren is not too much at pains to answer his question 'Why?' which is shaded with the hint of an apology for not having picked a timelier topic, such as 'terrorism' or 'war'. Nonetheless, in a rhetorical move characteristic of the book as a whole (and one of its less endearing features), he raises the loaded question of relevance only to place it in the company of contrary assertions regarding the significance of Japanese cinema, while simultaneously, and importantly, defending insignificance (the 'superfluous') as a category of relevance in itself. For Nygren, Japanese cinema is both significant and (significantly) insignificant: a generally inoffensive, but also unpolemical, position.

Nygren artistically situates *Rashomon*, the clutch of his project and the 'year zero' in his non-linear history of Japanese film (in the West), at the centre of his book, such that the reader is challenged to revise the actual chronology of film history put forth in relation to Nygren's own non-chronological account. Through readings of *Rashomon* and other films from the transitional occupation period following World War II, Nygren describes the conflict between an imported humanism – a centred, individual-oriented subjectivity – in contrast to a 'relational', 'de-centered', even 'feudal' established Japanese subjectivity (which he questionably characterizes as traditional). This conflict reflects one of the essential historical 'inversions' that Nygren, borrowing a concept from Karatani, sees as a condition of Japan's archetypal status in thinking more generally of the uneven course of modernization and development throughout Asia, and indeed the rest of the world. Nygren draws upon Derrida and Foucault at length to demonstrate how a historical Cartesian humanism that saw its downfall in European modernity paradoxically presented Japan with its essential *modern* challenge, such that Japanese modernity unfolded against the flow as an 'inversion' of the western model from which it presumably departed. He sees this notion of inversion as a theoretical means of liberating the contemporary Third World from a model of modernization as defined in relation to the West, in terms of inheritance and imitation.

As productive as this theoretical move may be, and I do find it compelling, attaching the significance he does to 1951 and the writing of Japanese film history in the West also causes Nygren to favour the post-war period (and western perceptions) over earlier history and Japanese perspectives in his understanding of Japanese modernity. His account of so-called 'traditional' de-centred Japanese subjectivity is all too neat a counterpart to the humanism he attributes to the post-war period, and seems to establish a kind of monumental Japanese legacy (to say nothing of a clean humanist legacy) interrupted only by defeat in war, a move which he would himself seem to repudiate even as he makes the point (for example in his interesting observations on the retrospective attempt in Japan to establish a continuity between the disrupted progressivism of the 1920s and the post-war humanism of the 1950s). Nygren's frequent appeals to the writings of the Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi for support of this

theoretical construct do little to nuance a point that could be, and has been, made more convincingly through broader historical investigation.

While Nygren does not always ground his ruminations on pre-war Japan as one would hope, he does devote considerable attention to pre-1951 European reception of Japanese cinema, notably in consideration of the problematic writings of Ezra Pound and Sergei Eisenstein on the subject of Chinese characters in relation to the image. His own preoccupation with the character system leads him, in turn, into questionable territory as he develops a notion of the cinema as an imported, logocentric technology 'shaped (by an) alphabetic writing' alien to Japanese subjectivity as he defines it via Doi. Nygren argues the position that the cinema was a technology 'ideologically constructed' in the West before its adaptation in Japan into a fundamentally hybrid textual practice encompassing the presumably essential logocentrism of the apparatus as well as the essentially 'decentered structure' of Chinese writing, which he sees at play in the aesthetic use of the technology by, for example, Ozu and Mizoguchi. The differences between the Roman alphabet and Chinese writing (or indeed writing in the Japanese syllaberies) raise novel theoretical questions about cinematic influence, but this endeavour also seems to test the limits of plausibility. His insistence on the ideological essence of the imported apparatus recalls, with less irony, Jun'ichirô Tanizaki's provocative wish to imagine a Japan that might itself have invented the electric light bulb, rather than having imported the technology from the West, in order to have entered a less garishly illuminated modernity, one in which so-called tradition and progress would be more seamlessly integrated (*In Praise of Shadows*). But Nygren's comparably imaginative account of the origins of Japanese cinema and of the discursive process by which it was, *in time*, ideologically reconfigured within Japan seems less self-consciously fraught than Tanizaki's lament. Indeed, his attention to writing threatens to cast it in a deterministic role, and moreover to reinforce the problematic binaries of West and non-West, modernity and tradition, terms that are not without relevance, but which install categorical oppositions that Nygren would like not to rely upon as he does.

The scope of Nygren's book, and the model of film history that ties it together, is admirable. Around the axis of 1951, Nygren moves freely from silent cinema to anime and video art. In concluding on the brink of the next big thing it is striking that his account does not make it past the 'videotape' and 'CD-ROM' art projects of the 1980s and early 1990s. One wonders why a book that permits itself such freedom of movement through history (and indeed through disciplines and discourses) does not find room to comment on the better part of the most recent decade. Perhaps for lack of inspiring material? But while the book shows an impressive range, it is slow to deliver on the promise of its title. It is not until Chapter 4, after a lengthy, at times frustrating, exposition of the book's theoretical ground, that an earnest discussion of Japanese cinema gets under way. This may be attributed to the fact that, as I have mentioned above, Nygren is more concerned with the significance of his putative subject within western theory and criticism (Pound, Eisenstein, Barthes, Burch, Richie and Derrida) than with the thing itself, in light of which orientation the book seems to strike a defensible balance. But I am

afraid that he is likely to lose readers before he gets down to what might be considered the substance of the project.

As a whole, *Time Frames* is limited by its reliance on only translated Japanese materials and secondary sources, a shortcoming that brings frustrations and motivates much of what is at fault (and which perhaps motivates the book's heavily theoretical orientation), but this again seems forgivable (if also symptomatic) given Nygren's stated project. He importantly seeks ways to talk about and understand Japanese cinema within the global scope of film studies, not as a rarefied body of knowledge specialized in its privileges or national in jurisdiction, but as an object of general significance. In this he seems at least partially successful, and this will be the book's important contribution to film studies.

The Cinema of Japan and Korea, 24 Frames series, Justin Bowyer (ed.), (2004)

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Reviewed by David Desser, University of Illinois; University of Pennsylvania

It is the most basic responsibility of any non-fiction book to get things right. In the case of a film book that means such basic things as names, titles, dates. A film book, even if it does not situate itself as necessarily a scholarly work, still has an obligation to educate by way of example. Unfortunately, the example set by *The Cinema of Japan and Korea* is that such things as the handling of names, dates and the like simply doesn't matter.

Mistakes range from the somewhat minor, such as misspelling of names or incorrect release dates, to more significant issues in a book on Asian cinema, like the inconsistent handling of name order, to the egregiously embarrassing: an index that is rendered almost useless not just by the omission of numerous names and titles; not just by variant spellings of the same person; but by *the mishandling of almost every single Korean name*.

Some very fine essays by a nice mixture of established film scholars, active film journalists and younger film writers are marred by a virtually uncountable number of errors. Though some of the fault lay with the authors themselves, I regard this largely as a failure on the part of the editor, the copy-editor and Wallflower Press itself.

Where to begin, then? Let's start with the small, but unfortunate errors. The famous documentarian is Frederick Wiseman, not Fredrick; the author of *Contemporary Korean Cinema* is Hyangjin Lee, not Hangjin; the Japanese director is Iwai Shunji, not 'Shinju'; 'youth' in Japanese is 'seishun', not 'sieshun'. A bit more serious, perhaps: *The Searchers* was released in 1956, not 1958; similarly, Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame* was released in 1956, not 1959 (the director died in 1956); the word 'onna' has been left off the Japanese title of *Utamaro and His Five Women*; the actual spelling of Melville's stylish film noir is *Le Samourai*, not '*Le Samurai*'; the French title of Oshima's *Ai no corrida* is *L'Empire des sens*, not '*sans*'.

And then there are a few howlers: *Ai no corrida* is not, contrary to the editor's assertion, a 'pink film'. While the pink film is indeed characterized by soft-core pornography and may have a subversive political subtext, Oshima's notoriously hardcore portrayal of sex is far from soft. *Branded to Kill* may indeed have been made in 'glorious "Nikkatsuscope" (in stark contrast to the blindingly bright colours that pop off the screen in *Tokyo Drifter*)'... but the use of widescreen cinematography ('scope') has nothing to do with whether a film uses colour or black and white. Virtually all Nikkatsu films were made in Cinemascope starting in the late 1950s, and most were in colour, but Suzuki Seijun often worked in black and white. And not to pick too much on Anthony Antoniou, but he gets the prize for poor grammar for this dangling participle: 'Literally translated as "the art of singing and dancing", Suzuki used kabuki...' 'Suzuki', of course, is not literally translated as the art of singing and dancing.

As for name order: it is all well and good to claim, as the editor does, that 'we have decided to use the most commonly-accepted Western versions throughout,' but it is certainly confusing to see, on the same page, 'Akira Kurosawa' and 'Toshiro Mifune' but then 'Shimura Takashi' and 'Sengoku Noriko'. Is Shimura Takashi the most commonly accepted western version of the famous star of *Ikiru* and *Seven Samurai*? It is true that Japanese distributors and PR departments usually use western-style name order in English-language publicity. And although most in the field prefer East Asian-style renderings (it is common practice for Chinese and Korean names), western style is acceptable; but not, it seems to me, one or the other at random. Yet Korean names are not immune from this book's confusion and inconsistency. Peter Harry Ris, who should know better, offers the following in the same paragraph: director Baek-nam Yun but then director Kim Do-san; further down the paragraph: scholars Kim Chongweon and Cho Heuimun followed by film scholar Young-Il Lee.

Name order is not the only problem that arises. Although it is true that due to shifts in the official English transliteration of Korean names, one does find variants that are acceptable and common (the Korean film archive has issued a very useful handbook of film personnel and the new standards for the rendering of names); still, consistency within the same volume should at least be maintained. Again, the venerable Peter Harry Ris has been let down by the editor (I suspect, given all the problems, that there was no copy-editor). He first lists the director of *Hurrah! For Freedom* as In-gyu Choe in the essay on that film. However, in his essay on *The Guest and My Mother*, the director's name is now Choi In-kyu. In other sections we find the director of *Arirang* listed as Na Un-kyu and later as Na Un-gyu. (The 'k' and 'g' sound has been one area where the new standards should solve future renderings; the same is true of the 'p' and 'b' sound.) Unfortunately, the misspelling of 'Choe' as 'Choi' along with variant of 'Un-kyu' and 'Un-gyu' not only offers confusion in the individual essays, but has implications for the index, to which, sadly, I must now turn.

If one could forgive the numerous errors and inconsistencies I have already pointed out, the index is another story entirely. Virtually every single Korean name has been improperly indexed. An index, needless to say, alphabetizes by family name. Thus we should find under 'I' the likes

of Im Kwon-taek and under 'K' directors such as Kim Ki-duk, Kim Ki-young and Kim Soo-yong. Unfortunately, when we turn to 'I' we do not find Im Kwon-taek; more unfortunately, we find him under 'K' as Kwon-taek, Im. And although there are no directors under 'K' whose family name is Kim, we do find Ki-duk, Kim and Ki-young, Kim. Yes, Kim Soo-yong is right there under 'S' as Soo-yong, Kim. The confusion with name renderings as noted above translates in the index as separate entries for Choe and Choi and Na Un-kyu and Na Un-gyu (of course listed under 'U' and not 'N'). In addition, Na Un-kyu does not appear on p. 3, but rather on p. 2, but that is minor in the stream of things as regards the disaster that is this index. For other names are not immune to mishandling. The notorious and wonderful Li Xianglan is indexed under 'X' while under 'T' we find the aforementioned Shimura Takashi, but also, even more bizarrely, Miike Takashi as Takashi, Miike. And I am at a loss to understand why so many of the film artists and titles mentioned in Kim Soyoung's essay on *My Own Breathing* have failed to make it into the index, especially Ogawa Shinsuke, who has an entire paragraph devoted to him and his influence on filmmaker Byun Yongjoo.

And if the back of the book in the form of the index is a complete disaster, so, too, is a good deal of the bibliography. Using the social-science style of family name followed by first initial, we find such entries as Barrett, G.; Bock, A.; Bordwell, D.; Burch, N.; etc. But under 'R' we suddenly find Richie, Donald. And while my last name is sometimes given an extra letter which is not in fact there, I do not believe it has ever been rendered by removing all of them save for the first one: but there I am as 'D. David', the co-editor of *Reframing Japanese Cinema*! In the Korean section, Lee, H. is apparently the author of two books, the first published in 2000, *Contemporary Korean Cinema: Culture, Identity and Politics*; the other published in 2001: *Contemporary Korean Cinema: Identity, Culture, Politics*. (This confusion may be found on Amazon.com, to be sure, but a look at the book's cover reveals that the correct title is the latter.)

The front of the book is also not immune from a major oddity, either. Author Nina Caplan, who has contributed a fine essay on *The Life of Oharu*, is mysteriously absent from the Notes on Contributors. Given the book's many problems, this may be a blessing in disguise.

As for the book's contents beyond these errors: the editor asserts that a collection of 24 essays (the '24 Frames' of the series title) divided between Japan and Korea 'cannot please everyone, particularly in reference to the editorial choices that have been made in regard to the directors and films under discussion'. He himself points to 'notable' absences from Japan, particularly Ozu and Imamura. Yet, he points out, the book is not intended to be exhaustive and neither are the films necessarily to be construed as a 'best of' sampling. Fair enough. No collection that gathers together 13 essays on films from Japan and 11 from Korea could hope to capture the full extent of the cinematic treasures of these cinemas. The question, then, is not to debate who or what has been left out – although the absence of a film by Ozu remains puzzling given his critical respect throughout much of the course of Japanese film history and the continuing force he exerts in Japan and on world cinema. Rather, let us consider the choice of what and whom to include and how these films work to

provide a reasonable introduction to the range of issues, artists and artistry these cinemas have to offer.

There is a certain bias toward authorship as a standard of inclusion, which makes perfect sense. The smartest thing Andrew Sarris said in regard to the auteur theory is that great directors make great films. This auteurist perspective structures many of the essays themselves, which provide mini-biographies and include relevant comparisons to the filmmaker's other works. If we can decry the absence of Ozu, we certainly must admit the necessary presence of the likes of Mizoguchi Kenji, Kurosawa Akira, Suzuki Seijun, Oshima Nagisa, Kitano Takeshi, Fukasaku Kinji and Miike Takashi. The inclusion of Tsukamoto Shinya calls needed attention to a somewhat underrated director while discussion of Shimizu Hiroshi marks another smart choice. There are canonical films chosen by these directors in some instances: Mizoguchi's *The Life of Oharu*, Suzuki's *Branded to Kill*, Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses*, Miike's *Audition* and Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo* duology. Kurosawa is represented by an early masterpiece well deserving of inclusion, *Stray Dog*; it is perhaps too bad that Fukasaku merits inclusion for *Battle Royale*, only because he has made many far better, interesting and important films. As for Kitano, the choice of his directorial debut in the form of *Violent Cop* provides a good opportunity to see the director's major style and themes emerging from his maiden effort. Shimizu's little-known *Sayon's Bell* seems to me to be the most interesting choice of films, along with *Perfect Blue*, to represent anime. Similarly, essays devoted to *A Page of Madness*, *Godzilla* and *Himatsuri* represent incisive choices of films even if their directors are less important than others.

On the Korean side, authorship is similarly a standard of value and here the book provides a fine introduction to some of South Korea's most important film-makers while, beyond that, many of the essays stake out some claims for future research and judgement. Of course, Im Kwon-taek is represented; indeed by his most canonical film, *Seopyeonje*. Similarly Shin Sang-ok's *The Guest and My Mother* makes its appearance as does *Aimless Bullet* by Yu Hyun-mok. Yet, given the still-relative paucity of serious work on Korean cinema, especially of its so-called 'Golden Age' of the 1960s, it is hard to argue with the inclusion of these films. The same necessary choice is true for the inclusion of Kim Ki-young and Kim Ki-duk, the latter represented by *The Isle* (a smart choice); the former by a more idiosyncratic selection in *Killer Butterfly* – the kind of selection that makes a work like this both challenging and fun. Younger film-makers are represented, of course: Hong Sang-soo with *The Power of Kangwon Province*, Park Chan-wook (here listed as 'Pak' Chan-wook) with *JSA* (Joint Security Area) and Lee Myeong-se with *Nowhere to Hide*. Of these only Park has achieved an authorship comparable to his older compatriots in Korea, while his 'Vengeance trilogy' has given him a status that I suspect no Korean director has in the West.

While this collection does not represent a case where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, despite the numerous errors, the individual essays range from acceptable to extremely good. Well-known writers like Jasper Sharp, Darcy Paquet and Kim Soyoung (full disclosure: they are on this journal's advisory board) provide models of concision, precision

and incisiveness. Kim's essay on *My Own Breathing*, for instance, manages to link this film not only to the issue of 'comfort women', but also to traditions of documentary and to Korean women's cinema. Peter Harry Ris's two contributions make an excellent introduction to pre-1960s Korean cinema. While my fan-boy days are largely behind me, I find Andrew Grossman's essay on *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* to bring back the kind of excitement one felt upon the first viewing of the film. And while Steve Yates's contribution on *Teenage Hooker Became Killing Machine in Daehakno* doesn't necessarily make me want to scour the Internet in search of the DVD, this is a good introduction to 'film-making' on DV and some of what is at stake for Asian Extreme, as well. Chris Berry's piece on *Killer Butterfly* is very sharp on laying out the terrain of a realist vs fantastic cinema and Nina Caplan's piece on *The Life of Oharu* has an elegance too often lacking in film writing. Tom Mes is very smart on *Audition* and Anthony Leong (though I could live without the constant comparison to Hong Kong cinema) reveals a sharp eye in his piece on *Nowhere to Hide*.

Perhaps the highlight for me is Stephanie DeBoer's essay on *Sayon's Bell*. The inclusion of this film in the collection is one of the major contributions of this volume. Too often the imperial cinema is either written out of mainstream film histories or segmented into its own volumes. Further, the usual examination of Japan's 'China' and its controversial screen siren Li Xianglan focuses on the films she made with Hasegawa Kazuo. The Taiwanese setting of this film and its focus on ethnic Taiwanese marks an interesting look into Japan's project in Taiwan which had been, after all, annexed into Japan a few decades earlier. DeBoer's essay pays careful attention to both text and context of this fascinating film. While this and other fine essays do not make up for the sloppy editing and bizarre indexing, at least readers looking for a place to begin their explorations of either Japanese or Korean cinema (or both) will find much of value.

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